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Backstreets

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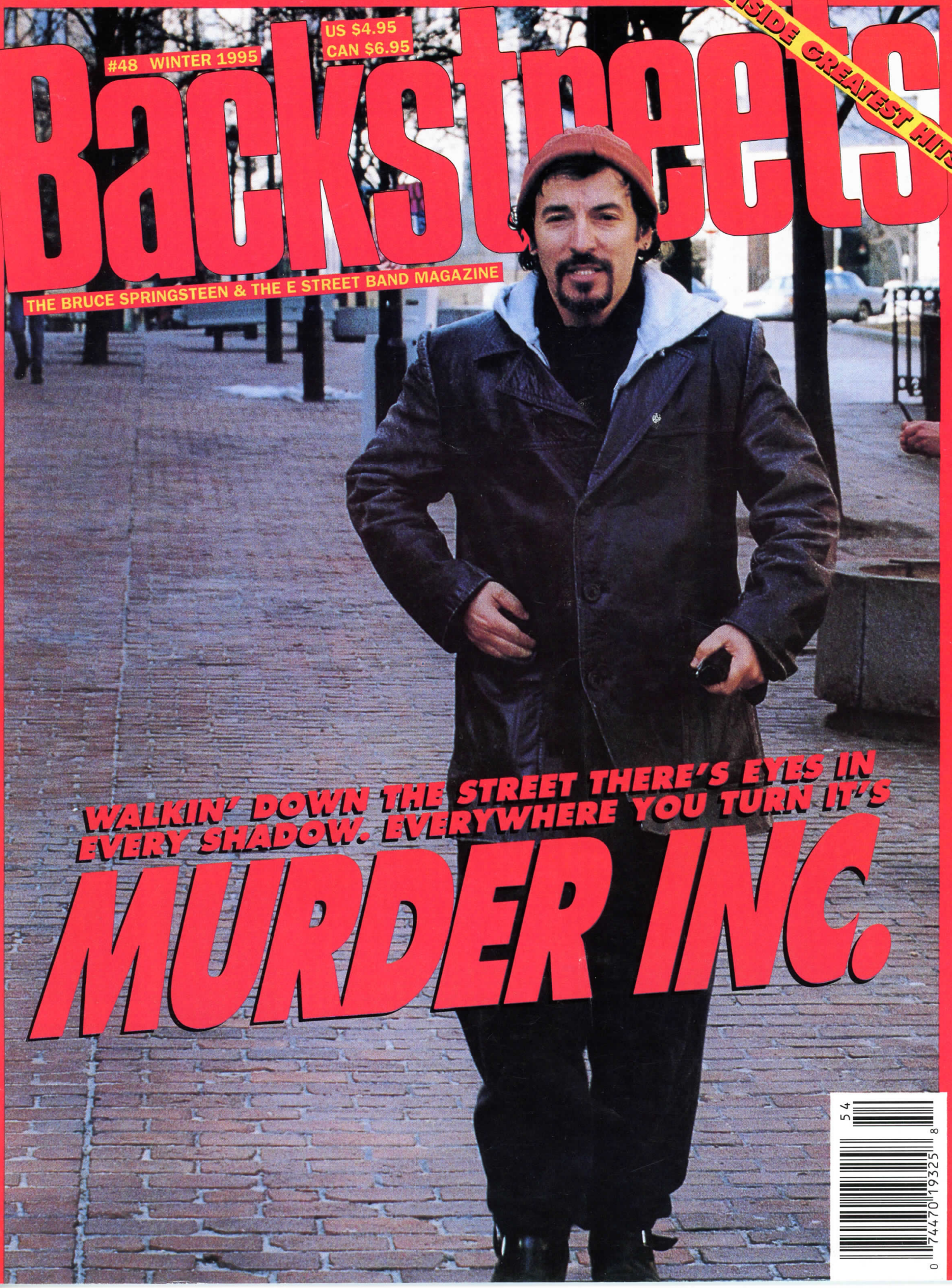
THE BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN & THE E STREET BAND MAGAZINE



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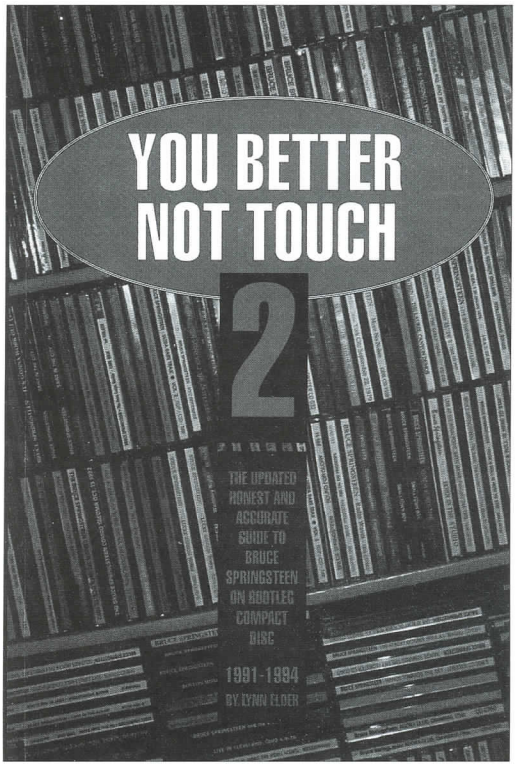
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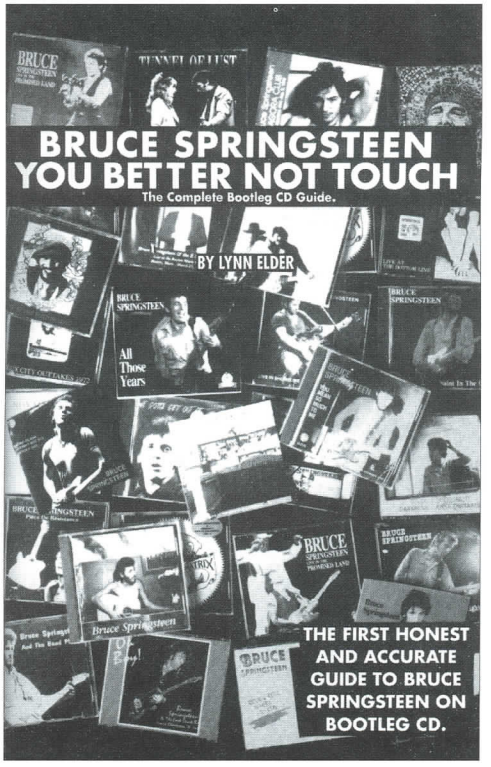
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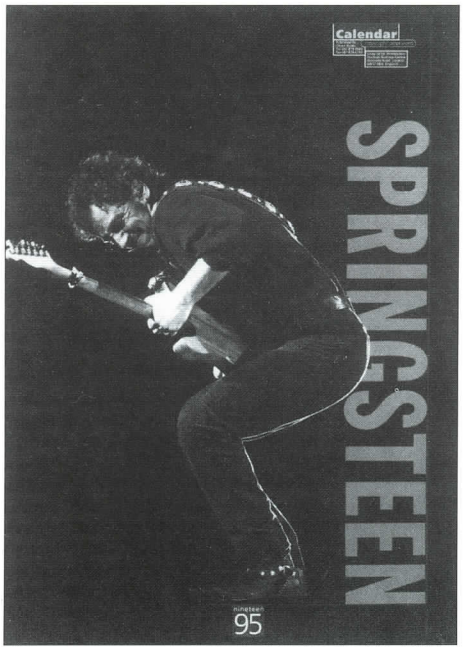
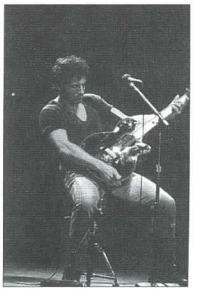
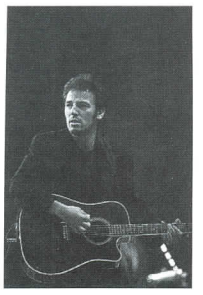


1995 UK CALENDAR

The Springsteen calendar for 1995 still available! This edition features 12 great photos of Bruce, including one with the E Street Band, one with Miami Steve, and one with... Julianne(?!). A few sample shots are shown at right: onstage shots include the Bridge Benefit, *Tunnel of Love* Express Tour, and the '92-93 World Tour; offstage shots range from '70s beard to '90s imperial. Like last year's, there's not a lot of space for daily planning, but this Boss-a-month calendar will look great on your wall for the whole of 1995....$15 plus shipping





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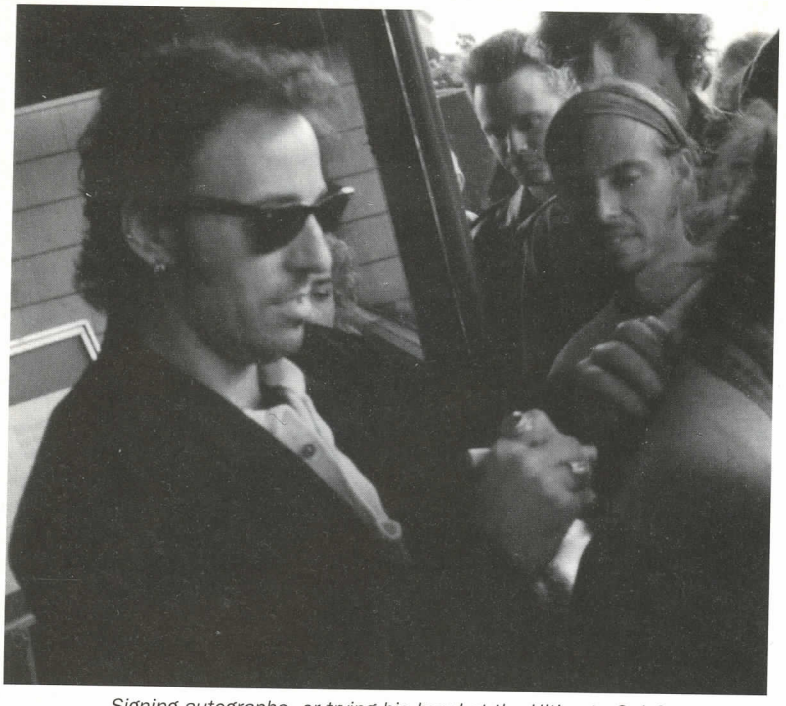

Signing autographs, or trying his hand at the Ultimate Quiz?

Backstreets

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Winter 1995
It ain't too complicated

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1/24/95 Portland, ME
Jack Milton/The Portland Newspapers Photo

OFF THE WALL

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN
11/13/94 Lake Castaic, CA
Bill Ream Photo

LETTERS

I SEEN THE GLORY

Dear Editor:

I just received issue #47—has it really been ten years? Your article, "Murder Incorporated: The Masterpiece that Never Was" was a masterpiece itself. In my opinion one of the best things to ever appear in *Backstreets*. Thanks for such a thorough analysis of certainly an interesting period in Springsteen history.

Most fans really had no idea what was going on with Springsteen at that time. I remember hearing rumor after rumor about the "upcoming," "soon to be released" new LP, but it seemed like it took forever for it to actually happen. I guess the amount of time between *Born in the U.S.A.* and *Tunnel of Love* and between *Tunnel* and *Human Touch* was longer than between *Nebraska* and *BUSA*, but it sure doesn't seem like it.

I remember reading in *Backstreets* about the so-called *Murder Inc.* LP, and I couldn't wait when I heard "Frankie" was to be finally released. I'm *still* waiting for that to happen. After *The River* tour, basically little if anything was heard from the Bruce camp; you've filled in some holes in my Bruce whereabouts-history during that time.

A couple of questions: In that "Murder Inc. Fantasy" sidebar, are the songs listed on the album ("State of the Nation," Yellow Hearts," "Our Coda," etc.) fictional? I assumed so, but hey, you never know. Also, I have heard some *BUSA* outtakes, but are any of the following songs listed in your piece out there: "TV Movie," "A Gun in Every Home," "County Fair," "Dream Song," "One Love," "Robert Ford," "Wages of Sin," "Seven Teardrops," "Your Love is All Around" or "Man at the Top" (studio)? I have never heard any of those or seen them listed by traders.

Anyway, thanks for the great work. *Born in the USA* was such a special period in my life and your issue sparked a lot of great memories. The summer of 1984 was probably the best of my life. I caught a dozen shows between the opening and closing of the first leg, and for my money that was the best portion of the tour. Before the political jockeying, excessive hype, the videos, Julianne Phillips, stadium shows, video screens, headbands, flag-waving, etc.

I drove to Cleveland, which I believe was the third stop on the tour, and I never got off that great ride until Springsteen ended that leg in "my hometown" of Buffalo with two shows in September. In between I visited some great cities—Washington, D.C., Toronto, Detroit—met a lot of great fans, and saw the best rock 'n' roll of my life. I would see a few shows later that winter and the next summer, but nothing could compare to that great summer of '84. Every show was different, each song was sung with conviction, I truly didn't know from night to night, from song to song, what would be next. Unlike the following year when the stadium tour basically had a standard set.

I loved the *BUSA* tour and the record—Jon Phillips did a good job in his piece. Many people think Bruce somehow sold out making that record, but I too have defended the record on numerous occasions. Just because it sold a zillion copies or whatever doesn't mean the record can't be great.

On the other hand there are quite a lot of people who think that *BUSA* symbolizes who Bruce Springsteen is. They don't get it—they don't understand what Bruce is saying. I think you have to take it in the context of Bruce's entire body of work. I think a lot of Bruce fans resent this, resent having to share Bruce with others who don't quite appreciate him.

Sean Cronin
Blasdell, NY

[You assumed correctly about this stuff, but we thought we'd clarify for everyone's sake: Most of the songs listed in issue #47's "Murder Inc. Fantasy" are, appropriately, fantastic—not as in great songs, as in they don't exist. On the other hand, all the songs mentioned in the "Murder Inc.: The Masterpiece that Never Was" feature have all been reported as actual Springsteen songs and all do exist, at least on paper. Whether these songs are in collecting and trading circles is another matter—the songs you list, as far as we know, are not.—Ed.]

LIVING PROOF

Dear Editor:

On May 27th, 1993, I had just returned from a long evening out with my friends. Exhausted, I sat down in the living room to watch Dave Letterman's last show on NBC. I was on the brink of sleep when I heard the crowd suddenly come to life. At first I thought they were booing until I saw that they were cheering for Bruce Springsteen. I sat up abruptly as Bruce started the performance of "Glory Days" that changed my life.

I don't know how to explain it other than that I found something that night, a reason, a purpose. Other Bruce fans have had similar experiences, such as the one *Backstreets* editor Mr. Cross wrote about in the introduction to the *Backstreets* book. I had the volume all the way up and the whole family out of bed by the time Bruce jumped onto the piano. In the last year and a half I have bought all of Bruce's officially released CDs and have recently moved on to bootlegs. I'm writing to let you and your readers know how lucky you all are. I'm 16 years old and have never seen Bruce live in concert. The *Born to Run* tour, the *Darkness* tour, the *River* tour, the *BUSA* tour, the *Tunnel* tour, and the *Human Touch/Lucky Town* tour are all history. I've missed them all. I will never see Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band and the mere mention of this practically brings me to tears. Yes, I'll go see him live whenever I can for the rest of my life, but I can't help thinking that I've missed Bruce's glory days. There are some songs, like "Rosalita," that he may never play live again. Don't forget how lucky you are and cherish all of your personal Springsteen experiences every day.

John Mayer
Plymouth, MN

THE HEIST

Dear Editor:

Given the release of this new album I am further discouraged by Springsteen's growing ambivalence to his audience. *Tunnel of Love*, *Human Touch*, and *Lucky Town* were commercially ambivalent albums—great art, but somewhat alienating. But I have no advice to offer Springsteen on what songs he writes or how he constructs albums. I'll buy whatever he puts out.

However, I resent having to buy three copies of the "57 Channels" single. I bought the first one for "Part Man, Part Monkey"; the second for the remixes; the third for "Janey, Don't You Lose Heart" and "Stand On It." I also resent having to track down a copy of *Unplugged* and various singles, plus the laser disc (which I haven't bought) and the video tape to get the total official output from that mediocre performance (I, like most *Backstreets* subscribers, have audio and video tapes from the radio and MTV broadcasts). And I now resent having to buy an entire album for a few new songs.

As I stated, I'll buy whatever product Springsteen puts out (as long as it has some unique music), I just don't think it is a decent thing to do to loyal fans. To hunt for imports and pay premiums for a live version of "Growin' Up" or a CD copy of "Stand on It" is a big expense for a small payoff. Springsteen should just be courteous to his fans, his customers.

All of this leads to the usual call for a boxed set. If Springsteen has commercial concerns, release the set and a sampler—that's what The Band is doing and what Rod Stewart did. It worked marvelously for Stewart. If Springsteen has artistic concerns, he can follow Dylan's *Bootleg Series* as a model. If Springsteen wants to keep his rejected tracks private, that too is fine. Just please don't continue to marginally rip me off.

Richard Pearlman
Gainesville, FL

I WASN'T JUST TALKING

Dear Editor:

I couldn't be more excited about a) Bruce working with the E Streeters again, and b) the resurrection of outtakes. And possible live shows to boot? This could be everything we have waited for for ten years.

Great issue last time out—you think Bruce doesn't read you guys? Then why do "Murder Incorporated" and "This Hard Land" reappear like this? Really nice job on the "Murder Inc."

piece—I'd like to see more "What If" stuff in the future. Anyway, it's a great time to be a Bruce fan. Keep up the good work!

Bert Haughin
Pittsburgh, PA

SAME OLD ACT?

Dear Editor:

Am I the only one disappointed by news of Springsteen's reunion (however temporary) with the E Street Band? Wasn't it only one album release ago that he set off on the "next phase" of his career? One wonders if we would be seeing an E Street reunion had *Human Touch* and *Lucky Town* sold as expected (and incidentally, I think they rank among his best records).

Can it really be that just when Springsteen had begun to bring his sound into the '90s with *Lucky Town*, he's returning to the outdated, cartoony glock/sax/organ sound of 1975-'85? (And I've been a fan since 1979.) To me, it just seems like pandering. Where's Robert Hilburn when you need him?

Don't become a nostalgia act, Bruce. Stay in Los Angeles where you are happy. Continue to make the dignified, intelligent and mature "Real World" music that is so sorely lacking in the Top Ten. If it doesn't appeal to the 15 year-olds, so be it. I don't see Dylan ringing up the Band because sales are flagging. He continues to move forward and follow his own muse and I respect that.

I look forward to seeing Springsteen work with new musicians who bring new perspectives to his music. Maybe it's time for him to re-read Bill Flanagan's 1992-'93 tourbook essay before he takes that second step back.

Troubled in Toronto

THE TIMES ARE TOUGH

Dear Editor:

Let me start by saying that I always have and always will *hate* greatest hits records. But I guess I can understand why Bruce is doing it. He needs some way to capitalize on all the Grammy publicity. So from a marketing standpoint this seems like a brilliant move. This is a record that could easily ride the charts for a couple years and spark interest in his next record. Just ask Tom Petty, another artist who saw record sales dip and a few empty seats on his last tour, now bigger than ever.

Sure I'm glad that the rest of the world will hear "Murder Inc." and "This Hard Land," but what does it prove? That the last two records were a mistake? For a man who stuck with new material throughout his last tour when he easily could have relied on his old hits, this seems like a step back. To me *Tunnel of Love* and *Lucky Town* are his most powerful records, and with a record of reportedly "Philadelphia"-sounding tunes nearly ready to go, why choose now to get nostalgic? But even though I don't agree with Bruce's latest move, I'm not going to be negative about it. The prospect of finally hearing "Murder Inc." live is reason enough to be happy.

Stephen M. Liloia
Succasunna, NJ

IT OUGHT TO BE EASY

Dear Editor:

Your latest readers' poll was torture! If I include *only* the essential "Best of" tracks, my list includes 42 songs (a 3-CD set). So, I tried to pick one or two from each album, as well as a few loose ends.

But as I'm going over my list, trying to narrow down a 14 track "Best of," I have become too frustrated to continue. Even the 23-song list I'm considering would leave out some of Bruce's greatest work.

I give up on the poll, and have again come to the conclusion that Sony doesn't have a clue when it comes to marketing Bruce. Instead of a sad attempt at a greatest hits package, why not get to work on the long-overdue boxed set?

To all the folks at *Backstreets*, I'm sorry I don't have a list to contribute, but I just can't go through with it. I'm not trying to say that Bruce is the greatest artist of all time, but what I am trying to say is that if ever there was an artist who should never release a greatest hits disc, Bruce is the one. A single or double disc set simply would not do justice to the best of what Bruce has to offer.

Chuck Earling
Williamstown, NJ

ORIGINAL SPRINGSTEEN TOURBOOKS

These officially-licensed tourbooks are out-of-print and have been unavailable anywhere since they were sold exclusively at concerts. Essential items and great gifts for any Bruce fan.

This 32-page color program features stunning color photos of Bruce on- stage and off, taken by Neal Preston, Annie Leibowitz, and others. Excerpt from Bill Flanagan's *Musician* story from May of 1992. Profiles on each of the new band members. Glossy covers, matte pages. A gorgeous edition.

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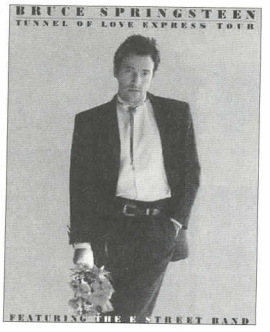

This lavish, oversized tourbook sold on the *Tunnel* tour contains dozens of striking color photos of Springsteen and the band, along with the lyrics to the LP (including "Roulette") and Bill Barol's excellent feature on *Tunnel* from *Newsweek*, 11/2/87.

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THE BACK STREETS

Where's "Rosie"?

Greatest Hits (and Misses)

By Charles R. Cross

When the news leaked out in January that Bruce Springsteen's twelfth album would be a greatest hits release—including four new songs recorded with the reunited E Street Band—every Springsteen fan I know thought that April Fool's had come early. It was shocking to hear that an artist who in the past had always shunned the idea of anything that hinted of overt commercialism was releasing a greatest hits package. The news about Bruce working with the E Streeters—news embraced by most hardcore fans—was overshadowed by the fact that it took a greatest hits package to see this reunion come together.

By describing these events as "shocking," I don't attempt to give them either a positive or negative spin. At this point, in mid-February, I'm still not exactly sure how to judge the news and even as I hold *Greatest Hits* in my hands, it isn't any clearer. I've become frustrated and resigned enough at the long wait between Springsteen albums that I am thankful for *anything* new with Bruce's name on it, be it a greatest hits package, a live CD, a soundtrack album, an album with Richie Havens singing Bruce songs, or a bootleg CD. At one point I probably would have objected to the idea of a greatest hits package on purist grounds (since each individual Bruce Springsteen record can be thought to have a theme, pulling the songs out of their respective settings takes away some of their power). But at this point I'm so exhausted by Bruce's marathon recording sessions and the length between albums that I'd welcome even four new tracks. And I do love the new songs.

Most of the fans I know who are upset over the *Greatest Hits* package object for one reason only: They think its release will further stall the next new Bruce Springsteen album. Though sources within Sony say the new album is still expected out before the end of the year, some fans weren't so optimistic, thinking that anything that distracts Springsteen will slow him down. Springsteen continues to say in interviews that he'd like to put out more albums in a shorter time span, but he has not yet fulfilled that goal and the more he talks about it the more frustrated everyone becomes when the next wait between albums establishes a new North American record. The verdict is not yet in on the upcoming record, but most sources within Springsteen's circle say that the intent, if nothing else, is to have the new record by September. There's some commercial logic to that too, buoyed by the release of *Greatest Hits*: If the hits album does well, it will behoove Bruce to follow it up quickly to help capitalize on his chart success.

Many Springsteen fans have objected to the *Greatest Hits* release on "moral" grounds, since they all own every album anyway they see it as an inflated price for four new songs. And the CD will be pricey for those four tracks. But many of these same purists shell out hundreds of dollars for bootleg CDs (and collectors like myself gladly shell out over $35 for the Japanese import *The Live Collection* that has two tracks not on the live record, "Incident on 57th Street" and "For You," pure majesty in my opinion and worth every cent).

Part of the "moral" argument comes because fans want to hold Bruce to a higher standard than other artists. I wish I could think of an artist who I admire who has been around for as long as Springsteen but who hasn't released a greatest hits set. But I can't. Elvis Costello has had two, Van Morrison's had two, Bob Dylan has had three volumes, and Creedence Clearwater Revival had *Chronicle* to help revive their career. Elvis had a greatest hits album out within four years of his first single.

Though the set is filled with hit songs, no one will confuse it with "The Best of Bruce Springsteen" and that's the package that I hope for. The criteria for the greatest hits release seems to have strictly been what sold the most. Even within the standards of a greatest hits release there were a few tracks that I argue should have been on this most recent release: "Rosalita," "Because the Night," "The Fever," and "Incident on 57th Street."

"Rosie" wasn't released as a single in the US (only in Holland), but this classic was indisputably Springsteen's first "hit," both with concert audiences and with FM radio programmers. There was some discussion of releasing "Rosie" as a single in 1974 but Bruce's first two singles ("Spirit in the Night," "Blinded by the Light") had done so poorly Columbia didn't want to spend the money to promote an artist they were close to dropping. There was also some question as to whether the length of the song—at seven minutes and four seconds—would work as a single. In 1978 Bruce and Columbia again considered releasing the song as a 12-inch single (and acetates were pressed up). "Rosie" never became an AM hit, but it was Springsteen's first FM hit (also his first music video release) and because DJs in Philadelphia played the song, it literally saved Springsteen's recording career.

Like "Rosie," "Because the Night" was never released as a single or even released officially in any form (though late word did list it as a B-side from the *Greatest Hits* album). But it ranks as one of Bruce's most bootlegged tracks and radio station airplay has always been strong. In terms of sheer numbers sold (adding up Patti Smith's cover and the 10,000 Maniacs, and even the metal band Keel's single sales) this would have to rank in the top ten of sales for a Bruce song (if not a Bruce performance). Patti Smith's version went as high as No. 13 and stayed in the Top 40 for nine weeks. And because of it's huge popularity in Europe (where by the early '80s, the bootleg market was almost as important as the *Billboard* charts in keeping an artist's popularity high) it was one of Bruce's biggest songs ever overseas, helping to open up those markets for him.

"The Fever" also never has been officially released but tapes were sent to radio stations in the '70s and it's been popular enough with listeners that even in 1995, my local Seattle AAA station puts it into regular rotation. Bruce's take isn't that different than Southside's but it is an impassioned performance, and as cinematic as Springsteen's songs get. I can't hear it enough, so whether it's an official hit or not, "The Fever" is on my fantasy chart with a bullet.

As for "Incident," this is clearly a sentimental favorite among hardcore fans. If you ever were lucky enough to see this song played in concert, you came away a believer. Maybe it didn't get the airplay of "Glory Days," but it remains Bruce Springsteen at his most romantic. It is the type of song that you remember for the rest of your life when you heard it for the first time.

But then I didn't assemble *Greatest Hits*. Perhaps when *Volume Two* rolls around we'll get something other than the list of songs that sold the most as singles, and maybe we'll get something approximating "The Best of Bruce Springsteen." Everyone's personal list for that dream collection would be different: You'll find some great lists in our reader's poll within this issue, including more of my own fantasy list for a "best of" set.

And speaking of *Greatest Hits*, remember *Backstreets* is only two issues away from Issue #50, our upcoming anniversary issue. Please don't let your subscription to *Backstreets* expire before this special issue, which marks our 15th year of publishing. See you then.

CON TEST

I wanna find some answers

Revenge of the Ultimate Quiz

The wait is over. It's been five long years since *Backstreets* published the first Springsteen trivia contest, dubbed "The Ultimate Quiz." If you'll remember, the competition was incredibly fierce and it took a five-question playoff round between our three finalists to determine the winner, Supersub Robert Crane. But now the time has come to crown a new champion. We've compiled a list of formidable, but solvable questions to divide the real Bruce experts from the pretenders. Some are rather easy, a few take a bit of research, and others are going to take some heavy thinking and incredible Bruce knowledge. But we hope everyone who plays or follows the results will learn some interesting bits of Bruce trivia in the process.

Your incentive to participate is a good one. The first place winner and Bruce Trivia Champion will not only wear the crown, but will also receive a fantastic grand prize, which we'll announce in the next issue. Second and third place winners will get the beautiful, poster-sized uncut cover slick from *Greatest Hits*. We will also pull ten participants at random for free *Backstreets* t-shirts no matter how many answers they get right.

So what do you have to do to win? Simply answer the following questions as completely as you can and send them back to us. The person with the most correct answers wins. In the case of a tie, we'll hold a playoff. Nobody got them all right last time, so don't be afraid if you can't answer every question. You may still be a winner. Good luck. Send your answers to: The Ultimate Quiz 2, *Backstreets*, PO Box 51225, Seattle, WA 98115.

All entries must be received by May 15. The correct answers will be published next issue.

—Quiz compiled by Erik Flannigan, Charles R. Cross, Christopher Phillips, and Johan Bjernick

1. What released Bruce song contains some lyrics in French?

2. What city comes next in this series: Cleveland, Cincinnati, Los Angeles, _____?

3. Name the only known show where Bruce performed all eight songs from *Born To Run*.

4. Name the show where Bruce performed every song from *Lucky Town*.

5. Where can you find this image?

6. Who has shared the cover of *TV Guide* with Bruce?

7. What Bruce-related event happened on 9/13/89?

8. What did Bruce hear for the first time Oct. 9, 1980?

9. What two songs from *Human Touch* and *Lucky Town* were played the least on the 1992-93 tour?

10. In concert, on what song has Clarence Clemons occasionally played harmonica?

11. Who is Frank Marziotti?

12. What is the next song in this incomplete sequence: "Badlands," "Adam Raised a Cain," "Candy's Room," "Racing in the Street," "The Promised Land," "Factory," "Something in the Night," "Prove It All Night," _____?

13. Who doesn't belong on this list and why: Clarence Clemons, Nils Lofgren, Southside Johnny, John Fogerty, John Eddie, Joe Ely, and Steve Van Zandt.

14. What do "Roll Of The Dice," "Real World," and "Johnny Bye Bye" have in common?

15. Who is Ms. Pechanec?

16. Where can you find a bald eagle, glow glitter and paper coffee cups?

17. For what two Springsteen albums did Columbia Records use the marketing slogan, "Finally."?

***The next two questions are relationship analogies like you'd find on a test in school, as in the example* "pitchers *are to* baseball *as* quarterbacks *are to* football."**

18. "Gimme Shelter" is to "Cover Me" as _____ is to "Tunnel Of Love"

19. "Don't Look Back" is to *Darkness On The Edge Of Town* as _____ is to *The River*

20. What in-concert performance includes some lyrical quotes from Ian & Sylvia's "Love Is Strange"?

21. What's the significance of the dates December 15, 1910 and July 10, 1987?

22. Who are Mr. & Mrs. Schiffer?

23. What modern-era E Street Band member did not make a guest appearance on the 1992-93 tour?

24. Who "waits on the hillside where the Wyoming waters roll"?

25. Who wrote "For my country and my people, Happy Birthday"?

26. Name five Bruce songs with the character Bobby in them.

27. What instrument does Clarence play on "State Trooper" live in 1984?

28. Who is Philip Testa?

29. What official release begins with these four songs: "Rosalita," "The River," "Thunder Road," "Atlantic City"?

30. What song includes the lyric "I work hard to prove my love is true"?

ON LIPS

LAY DOWN YOUR BETS

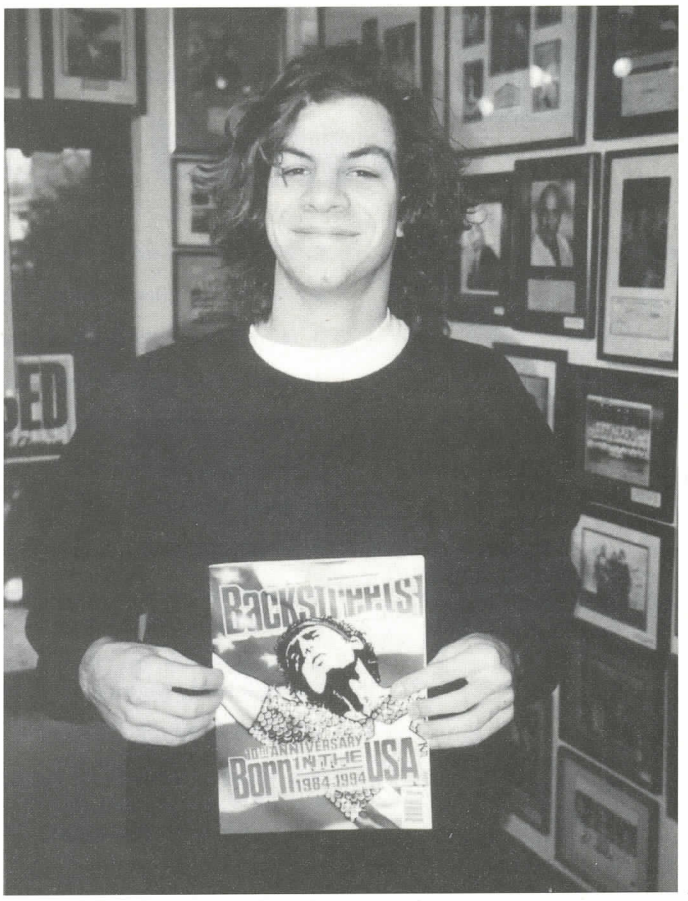
With the excitement surrounding any new release from Springsteen also comes anticipation of a tour, and this time the rumor mill has been churning around the clock. Springsteen appearances have been predicted everywhere from an Italian music festival at the end of February to an all-star concert in Vietnam in June. But the hottest rumors these days concern possible Springsteen shows with the E Street Band. At the time of the band's studio reunion all reports specified that no tour was planned, and there is still no official word as we go to press. Hopes are high, however, partially due to advertisements placed by ticket agencies plus reports from within Sony on possible summer shows with Springsteen and the band. According to one source within the label, one option being kicked around was a series of eight benefit shows on the East coast and eight more on the West coast, but plans have been changing too rapidly in general to take anything too seriously.

LOCAL HEROES

Max Weinberg was interviewed on *Talk Live*, and while he didn't have anything to say about a tour, he did say that the studio reunion was the best the band had ever played. Members of the E Street Band had been busy prior to the reunion, and Weinberg's steady gig on *Late Night* was a good meeting ground for several of the guys before "the call" came. Garry Tallent showed up to jam one night in early December, running through "Ramrod" with the Max Weinberg Seven; a month or so later "I'm a Rocker" was the song of choice with Danny Federici, who was introduced to Conan O'Brien and the audience as "a good friend of the band and an original E Streeter." Out of this last jam came the rumor, as printed in the *New York Daily News*, that Bruce would be making a surprise appearance on the show during the February sweeps. . . . Tallent is still working in Nashville and produced Steve Forbert's *Mission of the Crossroad Palms* for release sometime this spring. . . . Federici is still leading the House of Blues house band and now working with the new Blues Brothers group. . . . According to the U2 fanzine *Propaganda*, bassist Adam Clayton recently contributed to Little Steven's new record while he was in New York. However, it seems that Steve's latest solo project is still on the back burner as he works with Meat Loaf and Jim Steinman, producing the follow-up to *Bat Out of Hell II*. . . . Clarence Clemons has signed to the Zoo label, with plans for a new album—the "new age" record that we've been hearing about—to be released in April. The Big Man told a newspaper that rock 'n' roll is still his "first love," but look for African drums and piano on this project in addition to sax. Quickly getting back to that first love, Clarence is scheduled to go on the road with Ringo's All-Starr Band this summer, along with Nils Lofgren. You can insert your own hopeful "unless..." here if you want to.

HOME ENTERTAINMENT

Graphix Zone Inc., the same CD ROM publisher that released the much-lauded *Bob Dylan: Highway 61 Interactive*, has cut a promising deal with Sony Music. Plans are already in motion for a Springsteen title, and if previous titles are any indication that could mean some unreleased material. No matter what, it'll probably be enough to make some fans buy the necessary hardware, and if it's done right, it could even prove to be worth it. If it's done poorly, suffice it to say that the chance to remix "Dancing in the Dark" is probably low on most fans' wish lists. Just hope they don't call it *Born to ROM*. . . . For new Springsteen footage in the meantime, keep an eye out for *The History of Rock 'n' Roll*, a 10-hour syndicated television series. Participation was reported from more than 1200 artists, including Springsteen. Exclusive interview material will probably be included, plus possible concert footage. Co-produced by Quincy Jones, the documentary is planned for early March broadcast, with video release just a few weeks after, on March 21. . . . Checking out a little rock 'n' roll history himself, Springsteen reportedly biked it from L.A. to Las Vegas to catch the Rolling Stones at the MGM Grand.



BILLY SMITH PHOTO

New Hope, PA's own Dean Ween at Walls of Fame, relishing Ween's appearance in the "Backstreets Jukebox."

KIDS FLASH GUITARS

The Recording Industry Association of America reported that *Born in the USA* reached 14 million in domestic sales in November, joining Fleetwood Mac's *Rumours* in the second place slot behind Michael Jackson's *Thriller*. One month later, at the same time *Born to Run* was certified quadruple-platinum, Boston's first album apparently leapfrogged to 15 million, knocking *BUSA* and *Rumours* into third place. . . . But while you might be hard pressed to find a cover of "More Than a Feeling," the Springsteen covers just keep coming. An Italian Springsteen tribute disc is in the works, entitled *For You*. Largely completed and just waiting to find major distribution, the album should see release by this summer. U.S. World Cup soccer team star Alexei Lalas, now playing in Italy (and perhaps hoping to make Bruce's list of favorite redheads), is contributing a song to the release. . . . On this side of the pond, JV Productions is looking for unique versions of Bruce tunes by all styles of unsigned or indie recording artists or bands. "No Bruce clones, just great renditions"; the compilation CD is scheduled for release this summer. Interested bands or artists should send tape and press kit by April 15 to: JV productions, PO Box 6904, Freehold, NJ 07728. . . . Yet another redhead threw her hat into the ring as Tori Amos covered "I'm On Fire" in concert last fall. . . . Boss fan Melissa Etheridge performed "Thunder Road" on her recent tour, a precursor to her *Unplugged* with the man himself. . . . Rick Trevino covers "Cadillac Ranch" on Columbia's new NASCAR CD, *Runnin' Wide Open*. . . . *Cover to Cover* is the new album from Jeff Healey; released the same day as *Bruce Springsteen's Greatest Hits*, it includes Healey's take on "Adam Raised a Cain.". . . And we saved the best news for last: "Murder, Incorporated" isn't just a new Bruce song, it's also the new label that Snoop Doggy Dogg calls home. No word of Snoop covering the Boss, but keep those fingers crossed.

THE NEWS

"Born to Run" tops UK poll

Bruce talks on BBC Radio

At the very beginning of this year, "Born to Run" was voted the number one pop song of all time in a UK poll. Conducted by London's *Times Magazine* and BBC Radio 1, the poll surveyed a panel of music journalists, musicians, and songwriters to come up with the best 100 songs (the panel voted for songs themselves, as opposed to specific renditions). Springsteen's composition most notably beat out Bob Dylan's "Like a Rolling Stone," which came in at number two.

According to the panel, the Springsteen song "includes all the ingredients we were looking for, from the arresting opening—clattering drums, soaring organ and a savage guitar riff—to the stirring climax. The lyric, inspired by the desire for escape via the traditional American devices of motorbike and girl, tones in perfectly with the thick rock backing and moves effortlessly from the tough to the tender. The middle section with its steady and noisy rise up and then back down the octave is thrilling and perhaps only Springsteen could find words to match the drama of the music."

There have been times when he couldn't be reached for comment on this kind of event, but for this occasion Springsteen did a fairly long interview on UK radio. Conducted by BBC Radio One's Trevor Dann on January 5, the interview took place just before the *Gretaest Hits* development, but finds Bruce paying his respects to the panel's number two pick and solving the mystery of hemi-powered drones.

Springsteen: I doubt there's any greatest pop song of all time, but we've been coming to Britain for quite a while, since the mid '70s, and the fans have been tremendously loyal and it's a kick, it's nice.

Dann: *Can you remember writing the song and what was on your mind at the time ?*

Springsteen: I think I wrote it in about '74 and I was living in a little house in a town called Long Branch and it was a block or two in off the beach. And I think I had this title and I was trying to come up with something around that title and the only thing I remember was that it took me a really long time to write it. I think it took me like months to get it. I worked everyday. I had this little notebook and I like, if you opened up the first page you see the like, first few lines and then page after page, finally by the end of the notebook the song was kind of intact, which was a lot for just a few verses, you know. But it took me a long time to write. It was really hard to write. That's all I remember and then trying to pull it off so it sounded right. We were working on a 16 track board up in Blauvelt, New York, and we were overdubbing and overdubbing and doubling everything and mixing everything down and it seemed like it went on forever.

Is it still a song that you like playing or listening to? You must hear it when you're tuning around the radio. I mean is it something you're really proud of?
I just played it the other day. But I hadn't played it in quite a while and I did a big motorcycle rally here in California and I went out and I sat in with Jackson Browne. And he said "Hey, we learned the song," and we ended up playing it and it felt kind of strange. I felt like we were playing somebody else's song (laughs).

Have you ever heard any good cover versions of it ?
Not that I can think of (laughs). I heard a few people have covered it but I'm not familiar with the records.

The number two song in our list, Bruce, is Bob Dylan's "Like A Rolling Stone." Was he a big influence on the way that you write ?
Oh yeah, yeah. To me that is one of the greatest records of all time. If I had to pick one, I'd pick that one, I think. That was, for me as a kid—it was just so tremendously, tremendously powerful. It was this sort of big *"You Are Not Alone "*(laughs) that came shouting through the radio. When I was 16 and living in a little town in New Jersey, that [song] was really just profoundly influential for me, for my music. It made me want to reach for at least the kind of territory he was covering in that music. I thought that was revolutionary at the time and it was really, really inspirational.

Just back to "Born to Run" and the lyrics. What exactly is a "Hemi powered drone?"
(Laughs) Oh, well, a "hemi" was an engine that was in the muscle cars in the '60s. I think Chrysler built it. It was in the Dodges and Plymouths. And the "drone," I don't know, I made that up. (Laughs) I'm not sure what that part of it was.

It was completely bogus then.
(Laughs) Well it was only half-bogus, I guess. It was sort of an idea.

What are you up to right now? Are you working on a new album?
Yeah, well, I'm just kind of, you know, in a studio and I've been working kinda in spurts since I guess summer time. And I've got a bunch of songs and I'm getting close and I'd hopefully like to have some music out in the spring at least if I can. I hate to predict 'cause I'm always wrong, but I'd like to do that. I got quite a few songs so maybe I'll be able to get it together by then.

Well, we'll look forward to it a lot. Bruce Springsteen, thank you for joining Radio One FM.
Well, I really would like to thank all my British fans who have been so supportive and so loyal since I first came over there in the mid '70s. And for me this was really a lot of fun and it was a real treat and I want to thank everybody very much.

the backstreets jukebox

1. Bruce Springsteen
Greatest Hits
Columbia (2LP)

2. The Delavantes
Long About That Time
Rounder (CD)

3. Spearhead
Home
Capitol (CD)

4. Bob Mould
The Calm Before the Storm
Kiss the Stone (CD)

5. Foo Fighters
Demos
(demo cassette)

6. Bruce Springsteen
Chimes of Freedom
Columbia (CD)

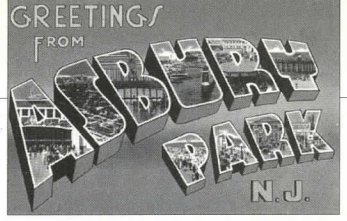
7. Archers of Loaf
Vee Vee
Alias (advance casette)

8. Dar Williams
The Honesty Room
Razor & Tie (CD)

9. John Wesley Harding
Name Above the Title
Sire (CD)

10. The Melvins
Stoner Witch
Atlantic (CD)

10 Monster Discs to Play Today and Everyday



Jukes' blues album in the works

Southside rings in the New Year

By Robert Santelli

In what is beginning to look like a tradition, Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes ushered in the new year at the Count Basie Theatre the same way they brought in 1994 at the Red Bank Venue, with lots of horn-drenched rhythm & blues and full-throttle rock 'n' roll. Although Southside suffered from a hoarse holiday voice, he managed to work his way through the two-hour set, thanks to sheer determination and a little help from friend Jon Bon Jovi, who played the first part of the show with the Jukes.

The week before the show there were reports that Southside and the band were close to signing a new deal with Epic, with a blues album supposedly up next for the Jukes. But for the New Year's concert Southside steered clear of the blues, opting instead for a wide cross section of the Jukes' standards that, though a little rough around the edges, kept the sold-out crowd rocking way past midnight.

Still, a few days prior to the show, Southside told the *Asbury Park Press* why he's never considered doing a blues recording until now. "For years I've avoided making a blues album because I've always wanted to let the music be that final refuge for me," said Southside. "But maybe now the time is right."

If the deal does materialize and Johnny and the Jukes go into the studio this spring, expect Danny Kortchmar to produce the album. But don't look for the songs to reflect Johnny's longtime interest in 1950s Chicago blues, the kind made popular by Muddy Waters, Willie Dixon, Howlin' Wolf, and one of Southside's favorites, Little Walter. "I'm looking to do a broader interpretation of the blues," he continued. "I've been listening to a lot of country blues lately, plus stuff by Bobby 'Blue' Bland, which is more along the lines of soul-blues. I've even gotten into Duke Ellington. So, if we do a blues album, it won't take the path most people think it will take."

Blues is big these days, with Eric Clapton's *From the Cradle* grabbing the honor of being the first blues album ever to debut at number one on the *Billboard* pop charts. But Southside is no johnny-come-lately to the music. Back in the late '60s, when he was paying his dues in Jersey Shore clubs and beer joints, blues was his bag. Southside was a member of the Sundance Blues Band, the Sonny Kenn Blues Band, and the Bank Street Blues Band. He also performed as a blues duo with Miami Steve Van Zandt and then sang lead in the Blackberry Blues (or Booze) Band, before he and Van Zandt formed the Asbury Jukes in 1974.

If Southside and his band sign with Epic, it'll be a homecoming of sorts. In 1976, Epic released the Jukes' debut album, *I Don't Want to Go Home*, which featured liner notes by Bruce Springsteen. This time around Johnny is thinking about penning his own notes. "I think I can write a few things about what the blues means to me. That wouldn't be a difficult thing to do. In fact, I suspect it'll be a lot of fun—if the whole thing comes together."

Three warm-up acts opened the New Year's Eve celebration before Southside and the Jukes took the stage 45 minutes before midnight. Singer-songwriter Charlie McIntosh and Bruce Tunkel and the Headdiggers, both of whom have albums coming out on the New Jersey-based Safety Net label in the next few weeks, performed first and second, respectively. McIntosh's roots are firmly planted in the styles of Bob Dylan and Springsteen. During his short stay onstage he unveiled enough of his new album, *Cold Rain*, to make the crowd want to hear more. McIntosh is currently on tour in England; the album is slated for spring release.

Tunkel's new album is called *Trampoline*. He claims the same roots as McIntosh, but Tunkel's backup band fuels his songs with a tankful of jangling guitars and the precise, Max Weinberg-like drumming of Chris Wolfson. Tunkel's bold decision to cover Springsteen's "Born in the U.S.A." to close his set brought cheers from the audience.

A few weeks after the New Year's Eve show, Tunkel talked about his new album: "I tried to let the songs go where they wanted to go. There's some stream of consciousness stuff, which does something cool to the album's direction. I also think I'm making progress as a songwriter and record producer."

Trampoline is Tunkel's second solo album. *Last Chance Afternoon*, his first, also came out on the Safety Net label a couple of years ago. The new album features a number of irresistible tunes that range from hard rocking ("Truth," "I Never Thought I'd See the Day") to introspective and soulful ("Angels," "Carnival").

Unlike *Last Chance Afternoon*, which celebrated Tunkel's admiration of Springsteen, *Trampoline* pushes beyond the overt influence the Boss has had on him. "The title track for the last record was really my homage to Bruce," recalled Tunkel. "I stole the 'Born to Run' sound, merged it with the 'No Surrender' beat, and gave it a 'Thunder Road'-type lyric. But the new album doesn't have anything as obvious as that."

You can order *Trampoline* from Safety Net Entertainment, 51 Lafayette Road, Fords, NJ 08863. The price is $15, which includes postage and handling in the US.

Joe Grushecky and the Houserockers also performed at the Count Basie on New Year's Eve. Though they're from Pittsburgh, they could have easily passed for a traditional Jersey Shore bar band, with Grushecky's soul-soaked vocals and songs that mix rhythm & blues with roots rock. Grushecky had been writing songs with Springsteen and even played a couple at the Basie, prompting more than one fan to think that maybe Bruce would turn up as a surprise guest. He didn't, but after the concert, a number of Springsteen fans ran over to Cheers, a Long Branch club where Grushecky and the Houserockers performed well into the early morn January 1.

Southside Johnny's been working too hard.

JOHN C. CAVANAUGH PHOTO

SOUTHSIDE SPRING DATES

3/17 Graffiti's, Pittsburgh, PA
3/18 The Show Place, Buffalo, NY
3/19 Newport Music Hall, Columbus, Ohio
3/20 Zoo Bar East, Toronto, Ontario
3/23 The Strand, Providence, RI
3/24 Toad's Place, New Haven CT
3/25 Stone Balloon, Newark, DE
3/26 Marriot Grand Ballroon, Richmond, VA

PERFORMANCE

"Born to Run" at biker rally

E Street Band plays Tramps

The question that plagued Springsteen fans upon hearing of the E Street Band's studio reunion—"but will they play together live?"—was answered when Bruce and the band took the stage at Tramps in New York City. Springsteen and the full E Street Band, including both Nils Lofgren and Steve Van Zandt, convened to shoot a live video for "Murder Inc." in front of a small crowd of around 300.

What may have started out as just a video shoot turned into an energetic romp through the band's old repertoire. As time stretched out between takes (six in all) of "Murder Incorporated," Bruce led the band through such classics as "Spirit in the Night," "Badlands," and "Backstreets."

Friends, family, and a few very lucky fans, who surely already knew they were witnessing a momentous occasion, must have known they were in for something particularly special when, after the first take of "Murder Incorporated," Bruce and the band launched into the full, classic intro to "Prove It All Night." The event was obviously emotionally charged for both the band and the audience, and the question that remains for the overwhelming majority of fans who could *not* attend is, "but will they play together live... again?"

As 1994 drew to a close, Bruce Springsteen stayed true to his unwritten law of only showing up where he was least expected. Unfortunately, that ruled out several promising shows, with Joe Grushecky and others, that—Bruce's reverse psychology notwithstanding—would have been likely candidates to receive "the Boss sneak." November saw only one performance from Springsteen, and few were expecting it to be at the 11th Annual Love Ride.

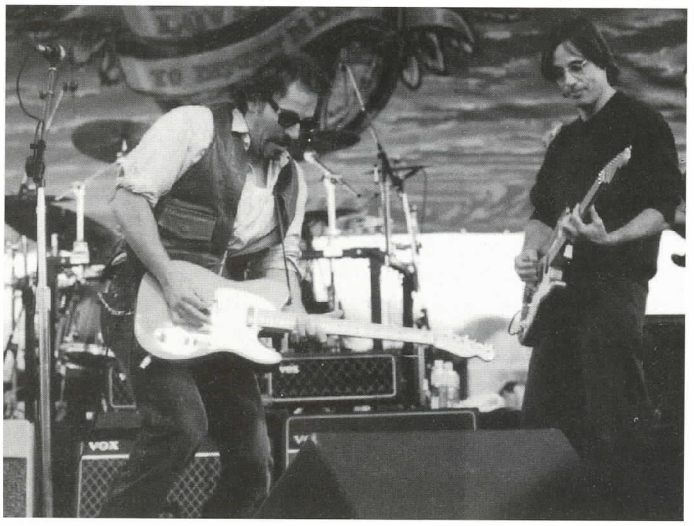
Springsteen took the stage at Love Ride XI for the most thematically-related five-song set in recent memory. The motorcycle rally finished up at Lake Castaic, just outside Los Angeles, for a post-race Jackson Browne concert. On a stage by the lake, Browne and his band played two sets for the moto-crowd before Springsteen came on stage for Browne's "Running on Empty," during the third and final set, joining in on guitar. When Bruce stepped up to the mic for the next song, it was a strangely appropriate juxtaposition of song and setting as Bruce launched into "Born to Run" underneath a giant biker-tattoo backdrop. According to one audience member, Bruce had the words to the song attached to the back of his guitar but still managed to forget a few. Bruce remained on vocals for two more songs, "Route 66" and "Not Fade Away"; finally Browne wrapped things up with what else but "Born to be Wild." The event was a benefit for the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

Bruce's final performance of the year was a benefit show as well, and a last-minute present for lucky fans on the Jersey Shore. With only four shopping days left before Christmas, both Bruce and Patti joined Holiday Express onstage at Tradewinds.

The Holiday Express band, led by Tim McLoone and featuring Bobby Bandiera among many others, had just completed a tour of December shows throughout the state, finishing things up in Sea Bright. Mr. and Mrs. S. jammed with the band for three songs, with Patti joining the backup singers and Bruce taking center stage on guitar and lead vocals for all three. "Santa Claus is Coming to Town" was first and by all accounts was a little rough, though still a lot of fun.

Things got better from there, with the last two tracks particularly rocking: "Run, Run, Rudolph," and a bluesy "Merry Christmas, Baby." Springsteen was rumored to have sound-checked with Holiday Express earlier that day, and while that may not have been supported by "Santa Claus," the overall performance on the next two songs made it believable. Springsteen gave the crowd a good dose of holiday cheer with a tight performance from the band, several scorching guitar solos, and even a little storytelling during "Merry Christmas, Baby."

Springsteen concentrated on studio work for the next two months, but mid-February saw another surprise appearance. Bruce joined Melissa Etheridge at her *MTV Unplugged* taping—after Etheridge told the audience what a great influence he had on her music—for a duet of "Thunder Road." According to *MTV News*, Etheridge's *Unplugged* will debut on March 21.



BILL REAM PHOTO

Dueling guitars: Springsteen and Browne at Love Ride XI.

INC FILM

SPRINGSTEEN GETS HIS MOTOR RUNNING

•11/13/94
Running on Empty
Born to Run
Route 66
Not Fade Away
Born to be Wild
Love Ride XI, Lake Castaic, CA

•12/20/94
Santa Claus is Coming to Town
Run, Run, Rudolph
Merry Christmas, Baby
Tradewinds, Sea Bright, NJ

•2/15/95
Thunder Road with Melissa Etheridge for *MTV Unplugged*, Brooklyn Academy of Music

•2/21/95
Murder Inc.
Prove It All Night
Darkness
Murder Inc.

Bobby Jean
Murder Inc.
Spirit in the Night
Murder Inc.

Murder Inc.
Cadillac Ranch
Two Hearts
This Hard Land

Murder Inc.
Badlands
Ramrod
Thunder Road
Backstreets
Little Latin Lupe Lu
Tramps, NY, NY

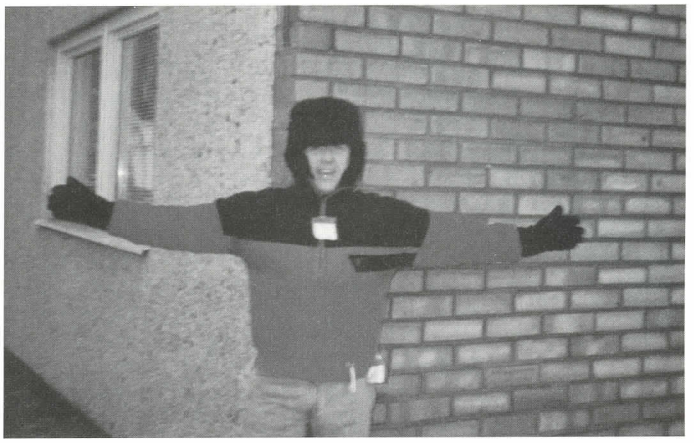
•Correction: Springsteen's 10/20/94 appearance with Bob Dylan was at the Roseland Ballroom, not Irving Plaza.

Big jam in Ornskoldvik

Federici visits Sweden for charity gig

By Bob Reed

(Editor's note: The news that Bruce Springsteen was recording with the E Street Band again excited many fans around the world and brought the spotlight back on what some have called "the best band in the world." Contributing Backstreets *writer and musician Bob Reed works with Danny Federici these days and with this piece brings us up to date on Federici's winter jaunt to Sweden, right up to the moment the phone call from Bruce came through.)*



BOB REED PHOTO

Danny Federici braves the Swedish winter

The scene was Sweden in December of 1994. One interviewer crowded in towards Danny Federici, renowned keyboard player of the E Street Band, to ask what would doubtlessly be the first of many Springsteen-related queries.

"What is Bruce doing?" the journalist asked, his breath steaming in the air filled with softly falling snow.

"I don't really know," Federici replied. "I think he's been working on a new album. I'm not sure. But you know, what we really should be talking about here is the kids. They're what's important right now."

Having begun the journey to this town in Sweden some 23 hours, five flights, and seven thousand miles before, Phantom Dan had finally arrived in Ornskoldvik to perform at a charity concert benefitting victims of cancer and AIDS. The show was set up to aid the most helpless and innocent victims—children. Joined by Robert Lamm and Jason Scheff of the band Chicago, drummer Martin Chambers of The Pretenders, Robin LeMesseurier (guitarist for Rod Stewart), soul legend Percy Sledge, Joe Penny, Carla Olson (formerly of the legendary roots band the Textones) and others, Danny was the featured performer at the fifth annual fund raising concert and auction of "Showbiz and Sport for Children with Cancer and AIDS."

While the actual traveling had begun on December 26, 1994, the journey had begun months earlier when the organizers of the charity approached Danny for his help and participation. Even though he was deeply involved in such projects as his solo album; his partnership in a new production/management publishing company, Shark River Music; studio session work and his ongoing live performances at various LA area venues (including his regular gig at the Hollywood House of Blues as leader of the Sacred Hearts); Federici gladly agreed to help.

Following a guest appearance in early December at the Troubadour with a new band, Brother, for whom Danny recently recorded keyboard and accordion tracks, Federici set out to provide more than just musicianship and celebrity to the cause. Danny launched a campaign to enlist donations and logistical help from Southern California, the place he now calls home (at least for the time being). In a manner totally uncharacteristic of the most elusive private and reticent E Street player of them all, Danny used radio, television and live appearances to gather support to defray the costs of getting musicians, technical people and equipment from all points on the map to this place in central Sweden. An overwhelming amount of the offers of support came from the efforts of KLSX, LA's Classic Rock radio station, and one of it's DJs, Steve Downes, who made sure that the message was repeated on his show for several weeks.

Though all of this help was volunteered, even a relatively small production of this nature—pulling together diverse people, personalities and music—remains a monumental task. Nowhere did this fact become more evident than when rehearsals began in Sweden the day before the actual concert. Despite the best efforts of the organizers, some contingencies cannot be planned on. With a geographical latitude akin to Alaska and Siberia, weather is a merciless, variable adversary in northern Europe.

While the first day in Sweden had been sunny, if cold (reaching -25 degrees during the night which lasts about 20 out of 24 hours at this time of year), the following day brought a snowstorm that virtually whited-out the entire country, halting any air travel that would have brought the necessary musical equipment into the town. It was even feared that some of the performers might not arrive in time. Guitar and bass proved no problem, since they qualified as carry-on baggage for LeMesseurier and Scheff, amplifiers and drum kits could be provided by local music stores and cooperative local bands (some of whom performed as opening acts for the benefit) and even an acoustic grand piano was readily available for Lamm. The challenge came with the prospect of finding a Hammond B3 and the keyboard (Ensoniq TS-10) needed to achieve the correct sounds for the songs to be played.

To add to that challenge, reliable sources reported that Sweden only had three Hammond B3s and 20 Ensoniq TS-10s within it's borders and none of those were in the town the show was being held in.

Fighting jet lag, instrument problems, last minute crises and changes to virtually everything, the musicians took the stage together for the first time. Federici acted as musical director and performed with all the major performers there, charting out all the various songs, making sure that each piece got the attention and rehearsal it needed to be as good as it should be. When Percy Sledge was unable to reach the venue that day, Carla Olson, a Texas-born rocker and consummate performer herself, jumped in to help in the musical arrangements for his material.

Meanwhile, it became clear that the Hammond and the TS-10 were simply an impossibility. The easy access to equipment found in America is probably decades away in this part of the world. Reasonable replacements, several other keyboards, including an Ensonig SQ1+, were located and brought to the venue.

Early morning, December 29,1994: Joe Penny and his band, Swedish singers Zia and Mikael Rickfors, joined Federici and company in an intense day of rehearsal and last minute preparation, until there was no more time, nothing left that could be done. It was time to fly or fall.

When Danny and the others had returned from the Strand City Hotel, the snow had piled up impressively on the roads, cars and buildings. Danny mused at the idea that the audience might have to be willing to come by dogsled, but also realized that

this weather was standard for the Swedish.

His worries were quickly erased when ushered through the stage entrance he saw that the entire auditorium was packed and alive with excitement, items like gold records, autographed guitars, music industry awards and more being auctioned off for great sums of money, all going towards research into the causes and cures for pediatric cancer and AIDS. T-shirts, signed by Danny and all the others, fetched sizable donations, and it seemed that for the last few days that everywhere you could look, the people of this town wore these shirts over their winter clothes like a uniform, a sign of common purpose and group excitement and involvement, culminating in the show this night. And the time had finally arrived.

Federici, Robin LeMesseurier, Jason Scheff and Martin Chambers all took the stage, one after the other to huge rounds of applause and cheering, settled in to their places and proceeded into three songs with Robert Lamm, "Thunder and Lightning" and "My Neighborhood" (original solo songs) and Chicago's huge hit "Saturday in the Park," much to the delight of the audience. Danny's signature keyboard playing added the flavor we have all come to love from the Jersey sound—joyous, festive, heartfelt warmth that is truly Federici's "voice." His playing was perfectly complemented by the bass skill and soaring backup vocals of Scheff, who was brought in to replace original Chicago bassist and vocalist, Peter Cetera. Lamm and Chambers exited the stage, leaving a fine local drummer with Danny, LeMesseurier and Scheff to weave two fine instrumental songs. Enthusiastic applause and cheers followed the players as they left the stage to make way for more items to be auctioned before the show continued.

There is a picture around somewhere, taken at this exact location, of Federici along with the rest of the E Street Band, Springsteen included, from 1975, the *Born to Run* tour.

After a short set by the Joe Penny Band (you may know Penny as Jake from the television series "Jake and the Fatman"), Danny, Scheff, LeMesseurier, Chambers and Lamm returned to the stage for what would prove to be the true powerhouse sets of the evening. This set was to be a showcase for the vocal skills of Scheff, who literally brought tears to the eyes of many of the female concert-goers, and it was easy to understand their reaction. As he soulfully rendered "If You Leave Me Now," "What Kind of Man Would I Be," 'Rocket Man" and "Stay the Night," it was apparent that he was far more than a replacement for the long-absent Cetera, but there was something else. The music had an urgency, an uncommon passion this night. Federici's organ work, which harkened back to those fluid, hypnotic and heart-wrenching live versions of "Racing in the Street," "I'm on Fire" or "Independence Day," brought a new life to these songs, and combined with Scheff's fresh, heartfelt approach, made these moments the most moving of all.

Percy Sledge then took the stage, and being the superstar that he is in Sweden, received a hero's welcome. Touring in support of his first new album in many years, the benefit fit well into his European schedule, much to the joy of the people attending. Sledge, though 50-plus years old and working back from some recent hip and knee surgeries, descended into the adoring crowd while the band adeptly performed his classic "When a Man Loves a Woman," as well as some great new material, "Love Comes Knockin'," "Warm and Tender Love," "You Got a Way With Love," and duets with Mikael Rickfors of "Blue Nights" and "I Wish it Would Rain" which brought the house down.

This seemed a good place to end the night, but having come this far, having worked this hard, it seemed only right that the players take a little time for themselves to enjoy. So Federici, Scheff, LeMesseurier, Lamm, Chambers and Joe Penny Band guitarist Tom MacLear hit the stage to cut loose with a no-holds barred version of the Chicago classic "25 or 6 to 4," followed by all the players and celebrities of the evening onstage being led by Carla Olson in a rendition of Creedence Clearwater Revival's "Rockin' All Over the World" to end the night.

RICH SAPUTO PHOTO

Federici recently jammed with the Blues Brothers at LA's House of Blues

Most of the musicians and tech people would leave the next day. Most had not yet become acclimated to the time change, but now would be heading into another bout of severe jet lag. The organizers of the benefit were still tallying the receipts of all the various activities, but were able to assure all involved that it was a spectacular success, far outranking all previous years. It was a snow-filled whirlwind that Danny and the others had found themselves in, and he realized as he waited for his plane to begin boarding in Stockholm that he had stepped through a time warp only minutes before and hadn't noticed it.

As he left the Stockholm Sheraton, where he had spent his last night before his return flight, it had dawned on him that he had walked through these same lobby doors once before, long, long ago. There is a picture around somewhere, taken at this exact location of himself, Danny Federici, along with the rest of the E Street Band, Springsteen included, from 1975, the *Born to Run* tour. Those had been good days, they were on the rise and the future looked promising.

Danny smiled and laughed to himself. Yes, those were good days, but maybe what he had just accomplished counted for more in the long run than anything else he had done. Maybe a sick kid somewhere might see the future as a little more promising this time.

The jetliner put down in New York's Kennedy International airport, dropping Danny for a short stay in New Jersey to visit his parents before finally getting home to see his wife, Kathlynn.

He had been gone almost two weeks, and had had a great time, even having the pleasure of appearing with Max Weinberg on "Late Night with Conan O'Brien," but was more than ready to be home when the phone rang.

It was Bruce Springsteen.

The E Street Band was together again....To be continued.

(Bob Reed is a co-partner with Danny Federici in Shark River Music, a production/management company. A songwriter and performer with numerous Bay Area bands, Reed has worked in the music industry for two decades.)

HIT ME WITH YOUR BEST SHOT

It's not the first time that "Murder Incorporated" has been a part of a greatest hits album. *Alice Cooper's Greatest Hits* got a five-star review from *Rolling Stone's Record Guide* and used a cover showing a gangster gunning down victims in the old Chicago "Murder Incorporated"-style, adding a whole new meaning to the title "greatest hits." And it's not the first time that a superstar has done a greatest hits collection between albums: Tom Petty, Sting, Paul Simon, Van Morrison and Bob Dylan have all recently put out successful greatest hits compilations. But up until early January 1995 it was a genre that few expected Bruce Springsteen to explore.

Bruce's situation stands in contrast to other artists of his generation, many of whom have put out multiple greatest hits collections. "I think what's most weird about this," says Neal Umphred, author of the *Goldmine Price Guide to Collectible Records*, "is that Bruce hasn't done one *before* now. He's had the hits, just not the 'greatest hits' collection." Dylan has released three greatest hits collections and the third one contains only one song that even charted in the Top 20. Over the years there have been at least 15 different Elvis Presley models.

Prior to 1995, only one artist in popular rock 'n' roll had a catalog with over two dozen Top 40 hits but with no greatest hits album and that artist was Bruce Springsteen. With the February 28, 1995 release of *Bruce Springsteen Greatest Hits,* Bruce joins the club.

When the news of Springsteen's *Greatest Hits* release first leaked in early January, it shocked fans for two reasons: 1) most had first expected a new album of studio material from Bruce in 1995; and, 2) reports also said the *Greatest Hits* album would include "two or three new tracks" recorded with the E Street Band in early January. If Las Vegas bookmakers had been keeping odds on either of these two events occurring, the chances would have been below those of the Buffalo Bills winning the 1995 Super Bowl or Fergie and Andy reuniting. But long odds or not, the reports were true and the album was scheduled for worldwide release one day before the Grammy Awards.

Not only were those initial reports true, the story became more bizarre as it progressed, as clues leaked out as in an Agatha Christie novel. Reports within Sony and Springsteen's organization seemed to contradict each other, and almost as soon as the album was officially announced—with a one-page press release from Shore Fire Media on January 16—the details changed. The first report had two unreleased songs on the record and a total of 16 tracks, but one week later other sources in Sony reported that there were 18 tracks on the record, including *four* new songs. The report of new recordings in the Shore Fire release was surprising enough (listing "This Hard Land" and "Secret Garden") but other reports from Sony added two others that shocked everyone ("Murder Incorporated" and "Blood Brothers"). "I can't think of another artist who put four new songs on their single greatest hits release," says Pete Howard, editor of *ICE* Newsletter. The news of the two additional tracks was so sudden that the two additional titles were handwritten on the official solicitation to record stores sent out in late January. The extra two new tracks even caught Sony's advertising department off guard: They had already begun television ads on VH-1 for the album that promised "two new songs." And when word came out in late January of a possible short tour with the E Street Band, news reports were coming so fast that even those within the label couldn't keep up with it. "Plans for the tour have changed three times in the past three days," said one source within Sony. Even the title of the album changed according to what report or memo you were referencing: The Shore Fire release calls it *Bruce Springsteen Greatest Hits*, but other Sony documents added the annotation *Volume One* to the set, suggesting the possibility of a *Volume Two* in the future. The official title once the album cover was designed listed the release as *Bruce Springsteen Greatest Hits*.

There were questions about whether it would be physically possible for Sony to turn the greatest hits album around in such a short time frame but in late January work was going on around the clock to assure a February 28th release. "The Beatles at the BBC release came out very quickly, too," says Howard of *ICE*. "Whether they can press them up in time is a question. It all depends on the priority the label gives a project. If Donnie Inner (Columbia President) calls up the heads of the pressing plants and says to give this project first priority, it will get done. But this is extraordinary." By February 9, the set had been completed and Springsteen was giving out autographed copies to his friends.

Though the turnaround time from idea to completed product may set a record in the industry, Howard speculates that the surprise release might work to Springsteen's credit. "In this information age," he says, "we are so bombarded with information that there may be a bigger hit to hearing about something that's coming out very soon. Usually record companies are telling us far in advance about upcoming releases and those release dates frequently get pushed back. By the time they actually come out, some of the momentum can get lost. With this release, there's no time for advance warning. It's here already."

Doing the Grammy Bump

To better understand why such a speedy release was essential, you need only look as far as the date of the Grammy Awards (March 1) and the date of the album release (February 28). Springsteen was nominated for five Grammy Awards this year and his nomination was considered a virtual lock even back in mid-1994 when "Streets of Philadelphia" started winning all those awards. His scheduled performance at the awards ceremony (the first one of the night) at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles (also site of the legendary Christic Institute shows) was rumored back in September of 1994. After Bruce won both the Golden Globe and the Academy Award, music industry observers were already handicapping the Grammy Awards in his favor. As soon as Springsteen was even nominated for the Academy Award, preparation began for a 1995 Bruce release.

Sony was most interested in capitalizing on was what's been called "the Grammy bump." Historically records that win Grammy awards and nominations sell well during the next quarter. The Grammy Awards (which are voted on by members of the National Academy of the Recording Arts and Sciences) are not without controversy though and in the past they've ignored acts like Dylan, the Rolling Stones, the Beatles and Elvis to give their top awards to the most mainstream commercial artists. Even this year's lineup has inspired some criticism: Michael Mehle of the Associated Press accused NARAS of picking nominees because of "sentimentality and industry sales, but little common sense." In the *Los Angeles*

BY CHARLES R. CROSS

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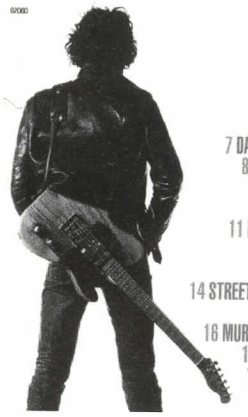

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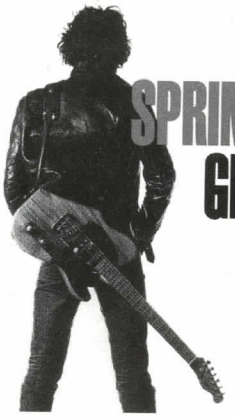

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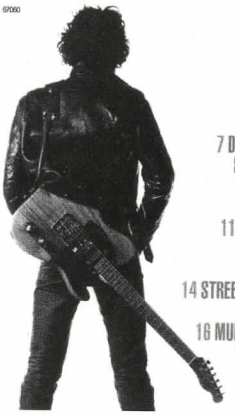

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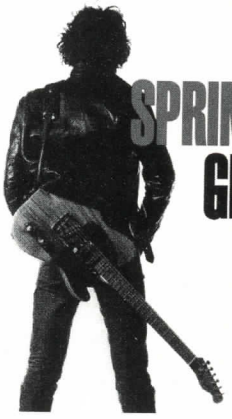

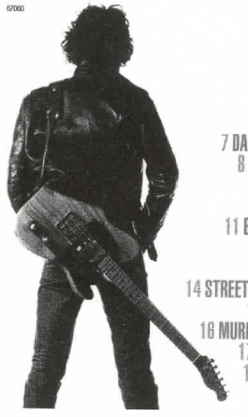

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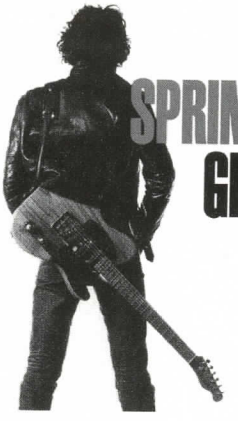

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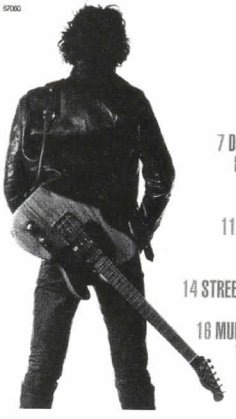

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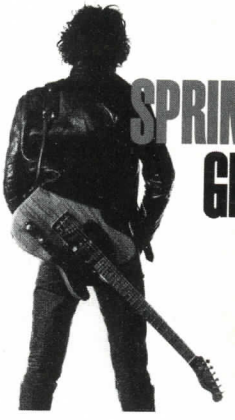

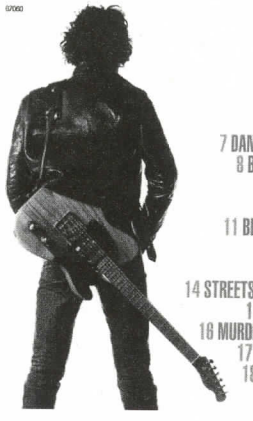

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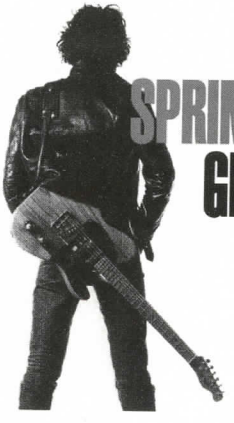

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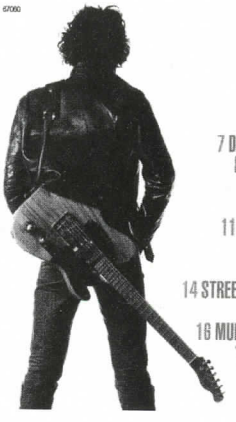

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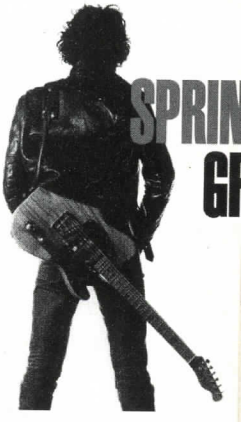

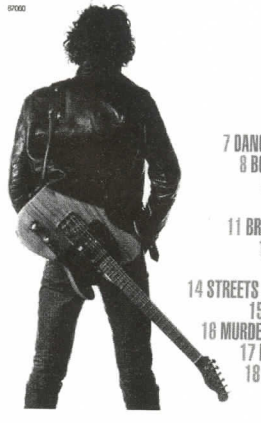

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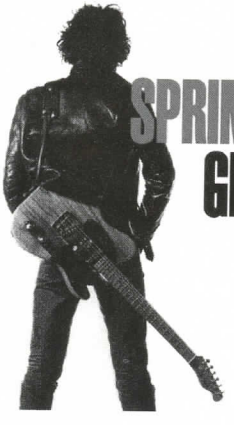

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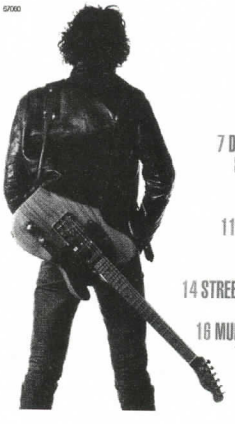

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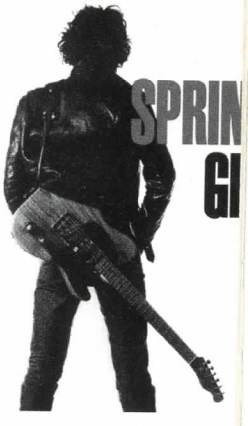

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9 MY HOMETOWN
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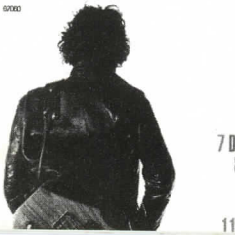

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Times Robert Hilburn also took on this year's nominees in a story headlined, "Plenty to Crow (and Squawk) About."

Despite the Grammy Award's history of ignoring talent, the Awards still have a major impact with record buyers and so they are coveted for their sales boost as much as for the honor of the recognition. The same holds true for the Academy Awards and the box office takes of films—many studios will keep slow-grossing pictures in the theatrical market hoping that an Oscar might draw in more viewers.

The situation for Springsteen and the past year of awards shows has been complicated by the fact that the song that's been bringing home the bacon, "Streets of Philadelphia," isn't even *on* a Bruce Springsteen album. The only album it's been available on so far is the soundtrack record to *Philadelphia*. One of the commercial benefits of having a hit single is that one hit song can encourage listeners to buy an album of other material they are unfamiliar with (for evidence you need only look so far as the many new wave albums of the early '80s that had one hit and lots of filler). But in Springsteen's case, "Streets of Philadelphia" is such a striking departure from his other albums, it was hard for a store clerk to direct a fan to other "similar" Bruce Springsteen choices. At least Epic, which released the soundtrack to *Philadelphia*, is part of the Sony corporate parent so the company did benefit financially from their star's surprise hit song, even if it didn't spur sales of Springsteen albums per se. With "Streets of Philadelphia" Bruce had his first big hit in several years—he even called the song his "biggest hit ever"—yet he was unable to convert that hit into album sales.

Springsteen found himself in an unusual situation, one that he had never faced before: He had a hit song that wasn't available in his catalog. Musically, "Streets of Philadelphia" represents the first song that can be thematically considered part of the post-E Street Band Springsteen oeuvre. Despite some different directions found on *Human Touch* and *Lucky Town* (like "With Every Wish"), the music and approach of those songs still reflects the working style that Springsteen had with the E Streeters. Though "Leap of Faith," for example, was a new song in 1992, it shared much with Springsteen's previous catalog (style, tempo, structure, guitar-based melody), as did most of the other songs on the two 1992 albums. The same cannot be said for "Streets of Philadelphia." It's not like "Born to Run," and it's not like anything else that Bruce has ever recorded. And many suggested it represents the same direction in style and sound that the new studio album reflects.

Where's the New Album?

The as-yet-untitled new 1995 studio album that Springsteen has been working on represents chapter two of the "new Springsteen." In all the talk about the *Greatest Hits* package, little has been said about this work in progress, and this album is far more important to Springsteen fans because it portends the future rather than glorifies the past. What we know so far about these sessions is that the songs resemble "Streets of Philadelphia" and *Tunnel of Love* more than the rest of Bruce's canon, and that the tunes are personal and scaled down. Bruce worked on much of this material at his home studio in Los Angeles, though he rented LA studio space to work on vocal overdubs. The lineup of other musicians who have contributed is unclear. Reports suggest involvement by Roy Bittan and Tommy Sims (the same cast as "Streets of Philadelphia") but nothing has been confirmed. Springsteen's office did suggest to the *NY Daily News* that the 1992 band was the only band involved, and not the E Street Band (with the exception of Bittan). The *Detroit Free Press* reported that the new record was still on track for a fall 1995 release, though no source was cited. One record industry source says that by early January of 1995, Springsteen had completed and turned into the label nine songs but was still lacking a couple of numbers to finish the album. Sony has gone so far as to assign a release date for the album within their long range plan—September 5, 1995—but this date is premature at this point in the game. In the past only about half of Springsteen's albums have made it out on the projected release date.

Most reports indicate that the new album has progressed much like *Tunnel of Love*, with Springsteen recording home demos and then bringing in selected musicians to round out the music when the material calls for it. Even though this process has been quicker than the bring-the-band-into-the-studio-for-a-year technique Bruce used in the past, it still has been arduous. At the MTV Music Awards late last fall Bruce gave us the first glimpse of his process when he told Kurt Loder, "I got a new record. I got most of my songs right now. I'd like to get it out in the first four months of the year." But later on the same evening, Springsteen gave MTV Europe a different story: "I'll try to get the album out from between my fingers in the first four months of next year. I need a couple more songs and then to finish the recordings."

Considering Springsteen's marathon studio sessions in the past, and the torturous process that writing songs has been for him at times, the "couple more songs" comment told more about the state of the new album than anything else Bruce said. There have been Springsteen albums that came together in a very short period of time (*Lucky Town*) and there have been albums that seemed like they were under construction for decades (*The River, Born in the USA*). Springsteen's comments about "songs" and "recordings" illustrate that he separates the two in the process of making a record and help lead credence to the reports that this record is being made in the mold of *Tunnel*, with home recordings providing the basis for the record with a little studio polish added to "finish the recordings."

More information came out of a short interview Springsteen did with Britain's Radio One on the occasion of "Born to Run" being selected the number one pop song of all time in a poll of UK critics. When asked whether he was working on a new record, Bruce replied, "Yeah, I'm just kind of, you, know, in a studio and I've been working kinda in spurts since, I guess, summer time. And I've got a bunch of songs and I'm getting close and I'd hopefully like to have some music out in the spring at least, if I can. I hate to predict 'cause I'm always wrong, but I'd like to do that. I got quite a few songs so maybe I'll be able to get it together by then."

The UK interview found Bruce in a different mood than the "I need a couple more songs" comment had last fall, suggesting that in the interim the writing part of the record had been completed, and his interview seemed to confirm the report of nine tracks being completed. But Springsteen continued to temper his optimism with the idea that his predictions for album releases usually don't ring true. Since the UK interview was conducted during the first week of January and Springsteen was still unsure on whether a release could be finished and out by March, his comments reflected wishful thinking more than anything else.

The Real Story

But the real story of the progress of the new studio record came with the announcement of the *Greatest Hits* package. No matter how much Springsteen wanted to deliver a new studio album in the first four months of 1995 (when Kurt Loder asked him if he could be held to that promise, Bruce said, "Uh, well, mildly so, I guess, you know."), he was not able to finish the record to his satisfaction in time to use "the Grammy bump." And with only one opportunity to take advantage of the Grammy Awards, and with "Streets of Philadelphia" not on a Springsteen album yet, time was of the essence and an alternative to a new studio album was considered. For Springsteen, something other than a new studio album also solved artistic problems because it gave him a forum that might be more appropriate for "Streets of Philadelphia" than a new album (where it might not fit thematically). A greatest hits release would kill two birds with one stone: Bruce could have a record out quickly (it was the only quick record he could do since even an unreleased B-sides set might take more time with mastering and engineering) and it allowed him to release "Streets" on a new Bruce Springsteen disc.

There have been reports from sources (Bruce's brother-in-law for one) that Spring-

steen quietly renegotiated his contract with Columbia early in 1994, though there is no official confirmation of this. But it's not a secret that Columbia has pushed Springsteen to release a greatest hits record for the past 20 years. The idea was seriously advocated by the label in 1985. Columbia also pushed for a live record for a decade and was only able to convince Springsteen of the idea in the late '80s. And by "convince" it must be noted that the pressure exerted by Columbia on the Springsteen camp has been minimal compared to the normal relationship between labels and artists. Quiet, polite suggestions are a better description of the lobbying effort that has gone on between label and artist for years. Though Columbia is a corporate giant, they have left Springsteen and his management to direct his career in the post-Mike Appel years.

Many artists have clauses built into their recording contracts allowing their label to release a greatest hits compilation at any point *without* consent. But Bruce had the fortune, if it can be called that, to not have many hits early in his career, and by the time he had Top 40 records he was better represented by attorneys and management. Even Bruce's first contract with Columbia (the contract between Laurel Canyon and the label) fails to address a greatest hits release. Dylan wasn't so lucky: *Bob Dylan's Greatest Hits Volume One* is infamous within the industry because Columbia compiled it without any involvement from Dylan, who at the time was suffering from his legendary "motorcycle accident."

Chances are highly unlikely that *Bruce Springsteen Greatest Hits* could have been put together without Springsteen and Landau's complete cooperation. Springsteen's relationship with his record label is more of a partnership than the traditional corporation vs. the artist battle that is the myth and legend within the music industry. As Dave Marsh commented in a computer post recently, "No artist with the longevity and stature of Bruce Springsteen could have a greatest hits compilation shoved down his throat—contract renegotiations take care of such control issues as soon as you *become* if you are competently represented. (Which Bruce is....)" Marsh's comments came in response to a suggestion that Columbia might have compiled the album without Bruce's involvement, an industry habit mentioned in Donald Passman's book *All You Need to Know About the Music Business.*

An Industry Standard

While Passman's book probably provides little reference for understanding contract negotiations between a superstar artist like Springsteen and his label, it does provide some interesting anecdotes on the concept of the greatest hits album in general. Passman describes a greatest hits release as "a compilation of songs from your prior albums, perhaps with one or two new songs." He writes: "I've always been amused by the term greatest hits since the album is usually neither. Traditionally, releasing a greatest hits album was a record company's way of blowing taps over an artist's career that had passed away. However, in the 1970s Elton John released a greatest hits album at the height of his career and sold eight gazillion copies. Suddenly everyone rethought their position, and today a greatest hits album is common at any point in an artist's life cycle." Passman's points are well-taken, and some of the criticism of Springsteen's decision to release a greatest hits package may be rooted in the old-school thinking that such a release means that a performer's hit-making days are over, a suggestion that few Springsteen fans would want to accept.

Describing how these releases come to pass, Passman refers to label histories of releasing these sets without artist consent: "If you don't say anything, the company will put out as many as it likes, whenever it likes, and pay you no advance," he writes. This is certainly not the case with Springsteen who as a superstar has a relationship that in some ways supersedes his contract—even if Columbia had the right in their contract would they want to risk their relationship with a major artist who one day could leave for another label if he felt he'd been wronged? Passman does note a tale of "one company that managed to put out 11 different albums of an artist who only recorded two LPs worth of masters in their entire career."

Passman's book (one of the best books ever written on the music industry's internal workings) is more on the mark when he describes the habit of adding new material to a greatest hits release. "It's becoming more and more customary to require an artist to record one or two new songs for a greatest hits package," he writes. "This is in the best interests of all concerned, because a hit single pumps up the sales of the greatest hits album (it's the only place to get the song)." Springsteen's contribution of four new recordings to his *Greatest Hits* album follows this logic.

Whose Idea Was It?

It's not clear whether the initial suggestion for *Greatest Hits* this time came from either the Springsteen camp or the record label, but the label has hungered for a Springsteen collection for years. The first big push came after *Born to Run* was released and while Mike Appel was still managing Springsteen. The idea then was to release a live record that featured Springsteen's biggest hits (of which there were only a handful at that point) and satisfy hardcore fans' demand for a live album.

Though Springsteen wasn't biting at the idea of either a live album or a greatest hits collection, that didn't stop a slew of promotional albums from being produced that essentially served as greatest hits releases, albeit with a more limited circulation than a commercial LP. Japan was the first country to weigh in back in 1978 when they produced *The Last American Hero From Asbury Park, NJ*, a promo-only compilation that was Bruce's first greatest hits album. The record had a very limited release (it was produced for radio stations in Japan and there weren't many of those in 1978) and a small press run. The striking cover graphics (*Darkness* outtakes) and the powerful title made this one of the first stellar Springsteen collectibles, highly sought after by collectors around the world and commanding prices that had previously been unheard of for Bruce items. Even today, with CD compilations from several countries, *The Last American Hero* remains one of the cornerstone Springsteen collectibles.

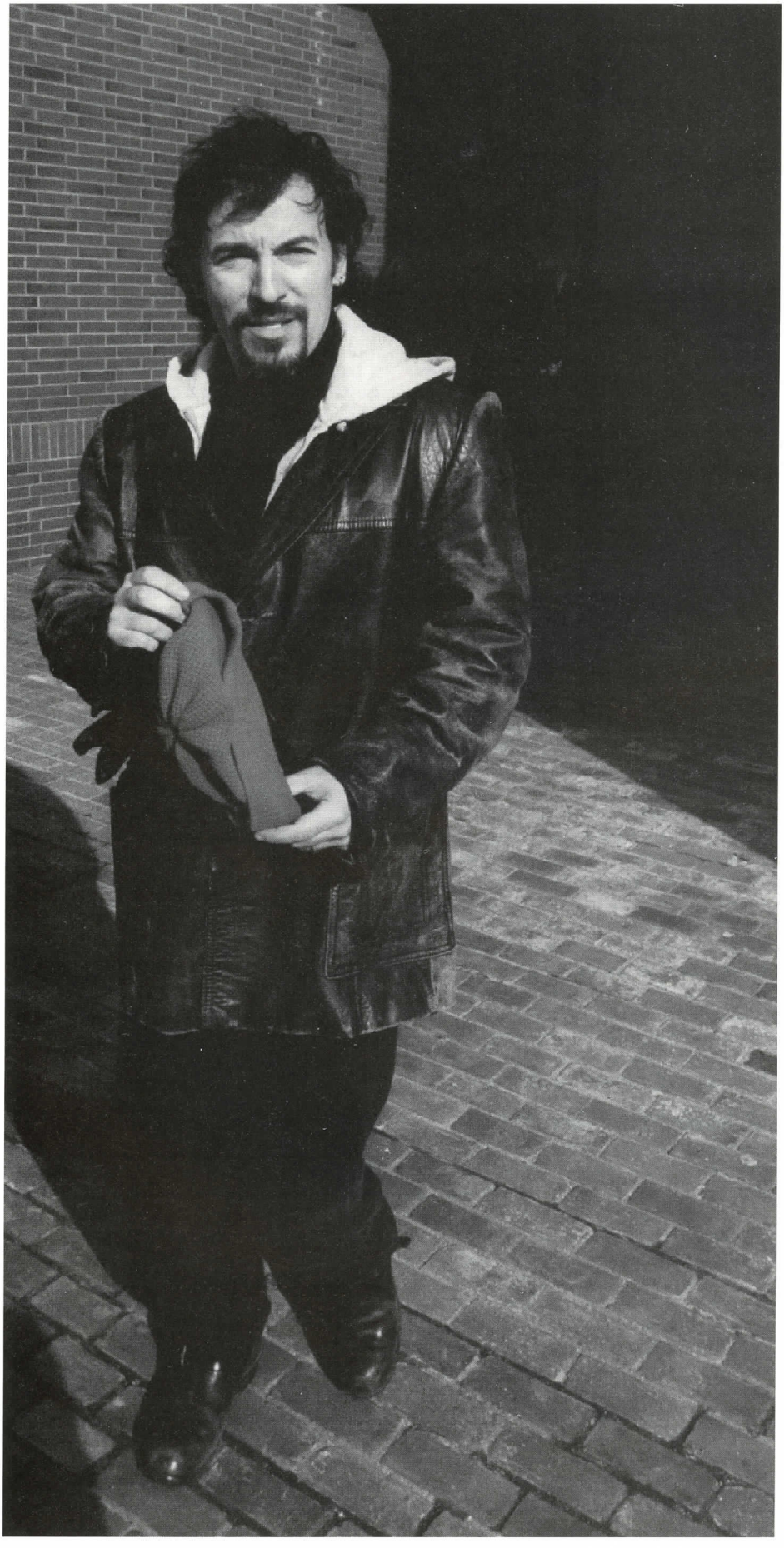
Along the same lines was another promo-only release in the US titled *As Requested Around the World* from 1981. This nine-track album featured a gorgeous unique color cover and was another highly sought after collector's item. The back cover listed the cities that *The River* tour played in. Yet another promotional greatest hits release was *Ao Vivo* from Brazil in 1985. This ten-track LP featured a unique color cover and remains a sought after collectible. There have been a handful of others too, including packages and boxed sets from Brazil, Australia, and Sweden.

The main purpose of these promotional greatest hits collections was to stir up interest from radio stations for Springsteen's back catalog. Though few stations ever played the collections straight through, having all of Springsteen's "hits" available on one collection made it easier for radio stations to find his most popular songs and, in the age before CDs, it made cueing them somewhat more convenient.

Sources within Columbia also suggest that there was hope with *As Requested Around the World* that Springsteen would like the idea so much he might allow a commercial release, though this was not to be the case. It is a testament to the demand for a Springsteen greatest hits collection that both *As Requested* and *Ao Vivo* have been counterfeited by bootleggers and are available on CD. Both releases have been made up to appear as if they were official CD releases but in reality they are copies produced by pirates for collectors who desire these tracks on one compilation CD (this can be the only explanation for their sales since all the material is available elsewhere though not in one package).

Controversy Among Fans

When word of the greatest hits release first leaked out in early January, it received an unusual response from fans (who wrote *Backstreets* in droves and posted comments on computer bulletin boards everywhere): It was the first time that news of a new Bruce Springsteen release was greeted with lukewarm enthusiasm from his core audience.



JACK MILTON/THE PORTLAND NEWSPAPERS PHOTO

The comments and reasons were varied but most suggested this move was "too commercial" for Bruce, that the greatest hits package was "a sneaky way to get us to pay a full album's price for two new songs," as one letter noted. One particularly impassioned Italian fan took it to task for both reasons: "I don't like this idea because it doesn't contain songs such as 'Rosalita,' 'Backstreets,' and 'Nebraska' and it is clearly a commercial operation and I'd like to think that Bruce is someone who is over that."

Though many fans did not come out and say this in their deluge of posts and letters, they privately admitted that much of their concern came because they were worried that a greatest hits release might delay the long-awaited new record. Springsteen's spokesperson says this is not the case and several newspapers report that a new record is still due later this year, but fans obviously didn't believe this.

Some experts in the music industry were surprised after hearing some of the negative response to the *Greatest Hits* album, and noted that Springsteen was the exception by not having released such a record previously. "The only other artist that has ever had a bunch of hit singles, had a long career and gone so long without a greatest hits record is Van Morrison," said Umphred. "And Van released his first greatest hits a few years back and it's been a huge seller ever since (*Volume 2* came out this past year). Even Van didn't have as many big hits as Bruce. I've heard some people seem to think it's unusual for Springsteen to be putting this album out but what would be unusual is if he didn't."

Umphred says that greatest hits records are usually big commercial successes and he predicts Bruce's will be a huge seller. "There are no major artists who have escaped the greatest hits package. And the idea that Springsteen didn't approve this is absurd: Do you really think that Bruce Springsteen doesn't want Columbia releasing this greatest hits package and making him millions of dollars with material he's already worked on?"

Though the set is likely to be a big seller (and is expected to enter the *Billboard* charts at No. 1), Umphred says the motivation is not just sales, it's also expanding Springsteen's audience. "Ultimately this set has little to do with greed," he says. "Many times a greatest hits package can often encapsulate a career that hadn't been put into proper context before. A great example of that was Elvis Presley and his *Golden Records Volume 3*. It was the definitive Elvis record of the time and it placed his work in a way that his singles did not.

"The idea of a hits package is to get people who have never bought an artist's album before to buy this release and then maybe reconsider the rest of their albums and their career," Umphred continued. "People might buy this record and say, 'Hey, I missed this guy Bruce Springsteen. This wasn't what I thought it was.' That's why these are called

thought it was.' That's why these are called compilations and samplers. They are intended to reach a market that has not bought the albums." Umphred says what he finds strange about greatest hits packages are the number of artists who release them before having any hits, a practice he says is particularly common in the country genre.

Howard rates the album's chances at success as good, noting that "coming off a Top Ten hit is the perfect time to release this kind of collection." Many artists wait until they are no longer making hit records to release a greatest hits package. The January issue of *ICE* lists numerous other greatest hits packages scheduled for release in the same month as the Springsteen album, either as new releases or re-issues. Other titles that will be competing with Bruce's include Buddy Holly's *Greatest Hits*; Sam & Dave, *The Very Best Of*; The Turtles, *Love Songs*; Ray Charles, *Classics*; New Order, *The Best Of*; The JB's, *Funky Good Time, The Anthology*; Joe King Carrasco, *Anthology*; Gene Pitney, *Ultimate Anthology*; Harry Nilsson, *Personal Best: The Anthology*; plus who knows how many releases in the country and jazz fields.

The History of Collections

Umphred notes that greatest hits collections began as a way to save consumers money rather than to collect sales from fans who already owned material. "These compilations began back when many artists released singles rather than albums and the greatest hits collections were a way to get a variety of different singles inexpensively on one long playing album," he said. "Elvis released five greatest hits records and of the 48 tracks on the first four sets, only two or three had been available on LP previously. Considering how many hits Elvis had, there actually weren't as many greatest hits releases as there should have been."

Howard was somewhat surprised that the collection didn't include every Top Ten hit that Springsteen has scored. "There was this Spinner's greatest hits album on Atlantic a few years ago," he said. "It didn't include a No. 4 hit and from the moment that it came out, the compiler didn't hear the end of it. This time around I assume Landau and Springsteen compiled the set, so they'll have to live with it."

Both Umphred and Howard cite Dylan's greatest hits album from 1967 as one of the first modern collections to have an impact and to find a place in the homes of even casual fans. "That record changed my life," says Howard. "It turned me on to Dylan." In recent years, Tom Petty's *Greatest Hits* album in 1993 was a huge success, giving Petty his biggest single in years ("Mary Jane's Last Dance") and spurring on sales of his back catalog. Petty's collection follows what has become standard operating procedure for greatest hits collections in the '90s: Include new tracks, remaster the sound on your old recordings and produce a new video to support the new single. Many artists also use the occasion of a greatest hits release to also market a video collection, though Springsteen has already done this.

"Everyone does this now," said one source with a major label. The only artists that the source could think of who hadn't produced greatest hits releases were John Mellencamp, Joni Mitchell and Jackson Browne (and there are rumors that a promotional Jackson Browne greatest hits set is slated to be released commercially). "Until the late '80s everyone did it without putting new tracks on it," the source said. "Now the new tracks are added to make sure it sells to the old fans and the hits are on to make sure it sells to the new fans. To suggest that it's an 'evil' idea is ridiculous. Some greatest hits records are awful and some are classics. If they work, they generate interest in an artist's back catalog. And though many fans don't realize it, Bruce has not been a huge seller of his back catalog over the past five years or so." *Billboard* began measuring back catalog sales several years ago and since the chart began Springsteen has not charted high, though reports are that his catalog sales are consistent and strong, particularly overseas.

There are those in the industry who think releasing this greatest hits release, while it may bring short term success, could hurt Springsteen's catalog sales. "Before Van Morrison released his greatest hits album, his back catalog was a consistent seller," said one representative of a large West Coast rack jobber. "Now that his greatest hits album is out, he hardly sells any back catalog. Many record stores are cutting back on the number of titles that they carry from individual artists, so with this move you might see some retailers carrying Bruce's *Greatest Hits*, *Born to Run*, *Born in the USA* and nothing else. Even today it can be hard to find Bruce's back catalog in mall-type stores. There's a question of whether you want to rob Peter to pay Paul. I'd hate to think that this move would make it harder for people to find *Nebraska*. As it is now, you have to go to a big store or special order the thing."

Four New Tracks

Commercial considerations aside, the news that most excited hardcore Springsteen fans was word of the new tracks. While "This Hard Land" is not exactly new to the hardcore audience, *Greatest Hits* will still mark its first official release (the song won the last *Backstreets* readers' poll for "Best Unreleased Song" so maybe Bruce is now taking fans' requests). The song was initially written in 1981 or 1982 and was seriously considered for the *Born in the USA* album, and perhaps for the *Murder Inc.* non-album (see *Backstreets* #47). Bruce began playing the song live in 1993 (debuting it at the Count Basie show) and it became a staple in his European live set. Springsteen even commented onstage about the song, introducing it by saying, "this isn't on a record but it should have been." It is now.

"Murder Incorporated" is also a song that Springsteen originally wrote in 1981 or 1982 and considered for *Born in the USA*. The stark style of singing and the violent lyrics reflect a tune that represents a bridge between the *Nebraska* material and *Born in the USA*. Springsteen recorded at least four takes of this song with the E Street Band in 1983, and the version on *Greatest Hits* is a remixed version of one of those takes. To speed the release of the new song, "Murder Inc." was released to radio stations through a satellite transmission on February 15, and a promo CD was sent out the next day.

Less is known about "Secret Garden." One Associated Press newspaper report suggested that the song was also a *Born in the USA* outtake, while Nils Lofgren said in an interview that it was a *Human Touch* outtake. The song title is not one that has been known of previously.

"Blood Brothers" is also a mystery track. One similar title that has been rumored is "Brothers Under the Bridges," which was an early version of "No Surrender" written during the *Born in the USA* sessions.

There were conflicting reports as to whether "Secret Garden" would be the first US single or whether "Murder Inc." would be released as a single too (as opposed to being released to radio which it was on 2/15). "Because the Night" was suggested as a possible B-side for a European CD-5.

Early newspaper reports also have led to some confusion on how many new tracks Springsteen recorded with the E Street Band in January. The *Hollywood Reporter*, which first broke the story, said Bruce had cut "at least two new songs." Other early wire stories described the new album as including "two or three" new songs. The final tally was four new songs, which contradicted even Shore Fire's own press release.

E Street Reunion

As for the involvement of the E Street Band, some members of Springsteen's larger circle were expressing surprise at the event even after it had happened. The first news of the reunion came from the *Hollywood Reporter*, which was tipped off by a source who noticed that it was unusual for several members of the E Street Band to be in the studio together: Further investigation revealed that it was a Bruce Springsteen recording session.

The studio sessions were held in New York City. According to several sources the studio sessions began during the first week in January and lasted several days. Clarence Clemons said he had to cancel his birthday party—on January 11—for the sessions. By the middle of January, Bruce was at the Rock 'N' Roll Hall of Fame Awards, and several of the E Streeters had left town already. Sources

confirm that two separate sessions took place in New York and that the total number of songs recorded number closer to "a dozen" rather than the "two or three" from the *Hollywood Reporter* story. "During the final days, Bruce started writing material in the studio on the fly," a close associate of the organization said. "It was just like the old days with Bruce writing something and the band learning it immediately. That old magic was back. It went very fast."

The *Hollywood Reporter's* story said the E Streeters became involved after "an apparently spontaneous decision by Springsteen to pull them together." New York made sense as a locale since drummer Max Weinberg leads the house band on the "Late Night With Conan O'Brien" television show and needs to be in New York for that. The other band members reportedly flew in on one day's notice after receiving a phone call from Springsteen. Steve Van Zandt is the only E Streeter these days who lives in New York; on the three new songs, Van Zandt is only credited as contributing to "This Hard Land" and he is not in either new band photo on the sleeve.

From Shore Fire's press release came the confirmation of the lineup for the sessions: "Taking part in the new sessions with Springsteen on guitar, were Roy Bittan, synthesizer, piano; Clarence Clemons, saxophone, percussion; Danny Federici, organ; Nils Lofgren, guitar; Patti Scialfa, vocals; Garry Tallent, bass guitar; Steve Van Zandt, guitar; Max Weinberg, drums." The press release also noted that "Springsteen is joined by the E Street Band on the new tracks marking the first time since 1984's *Born in the U.S.A.* that Springsteen and the E Street Band have been together in the studio." Frank Pagano also helped out with percussion on "Blood Brothers" and "This Hard Land."

As for an explanation as to why Springsteen decided to record with the E Streeters again, one behind-the-scenes source says that Bruce wanted the new material to "fit in with the old stuff and the E Street Band made the most sense." The exception to this, of course, are the tracks "Streets of Philadelphia," "Better Days" and "Human Touch." The title of the record reflects only Bruce Springsteen's name and not the E Street Band (the live record was credited to both the band and Bruce).

Over the past two years Springsteen has mended some of the ties that were severed during the painful separation of what some members of the E Street Band preferred to call "when our lead singer quit" rather than a breakup. In the last several months Springsteen has played with both Weinberg and Federici, and he has stayed in closer contact with his old band than he had in the past. Springsteen even invited Clemons and Weinberg to the last show of his tour in 1993, and they were warmly greeted by the crowd.

The news that Bruce was working with the E Streeters again encouraged fans and music industry members. "It's a good and classy move by Bruce," said one record company insider. "The E Street Band is part of these songs too, and it was wise for Bruce to acknowledge that. I'm sure they did a great job on the new tunes too." Another source said that at least part of the reason Bruce pulled together the E Streeters may have been their history of working quickly in the studio. "There's no way Bruce could have done this so fast with a hired band," the source said. "He had to finish this record very quickly and the only players he knew who he could work with—virtually without teaching them anything—was the E Street Band. Bruce has a chemistry with these players and they intuitively understand him. It was the best choice if he wanted to make a quick record."

Clemons told one reporter, "It was like we all took a nap and woke up and came back."

Reunion and Remasters

While many fans are encouraged by the news, and rumors of dates this summer with the E Streeters have buoyed fans even more, it's unclear what the chances are for a long term reunion. The E Streeters have all scattered and are involved in other projects. Weinberg is presently working with the Max Weinberg Seven; Tallent works on production in Nashville; Federici has been busy in Los Angeles with the House of Blues band; Lofgren continues with his solo career; Scialfa is reportedly working on new songs; and even Van Zandt is busy working with Meat Loaf. Several band members report privately though that a call from Bruce to go on the road or record again might supersede some of those other projects.

But the official word was in the press release from Springsteen's publicist: "There is no tour planned." That was not the report that Sony sources were giving in late January.

The Shore Fire press release did little to dampen the enthusiasm of ticket brokers in Los Angeles, who ran ads in the *Los Angeles Times* on January 22 listing an upcoming concert from "Bruce Springsteen with the E Street Band!" A call to the agency netted the news that these scalpers have been told from their "sources high up" that dates have been reserved for October in the LA Sports Arena and "it will definitely include the E Streeters." Of course, if you were to send these brokers your money now and the show weren't to happen, they'd gladly make interest on your funds for nine months and keep your non-refundable deposit.

Once the final selection of songs for the album was completed on January 23, Springsteen went to Portland, Maine, to oversee the mastering of the record. Portland is the location of Gateway Mastering, the present home of Bob Ludwig, who has mastered or consulted on all of Springsteen's albums (with the exception of *Unplugged*).

Springsteen and Ludwig were working hard to oversee the remastering of the early songs and one source at Ludwig's studio said that even Bruce had commented that he hadn't worked this hard on the specifics of a release since *Darkness*. Springsteen told an associate in Maine that he had been putting in 20 hour days on the project and that he would see it through. Some of the song selection may have been affected by what tracks were available in what sound quality already. *Born to Run* is the only early album of Springsteen's that has been remastered and reissued on CD (in the Sony Mastersound series). And the material from *Tunnel* to present probably is usable as is. That left the *Darkness*- and *River*-era work as the songs that most needed help and what took most of Springsteen's and Ludwig's time. Ludwig even remastered "Atlantic City" and "Streets of Philadelphia" for the set to round it all out.

Select-A-Hit

The other major subject of contention within the fan community comes from the song selection for the *Greatest Hits* release. There are as many suggestions for what should be on the record as there are individual Springsteen fans (and to answer some of those ideas, you'll find the latest *Backstreets* reader's poll elsewhere in this issue). Much of the debate seems to come from fans who think the collection should reflect "The Best Of" Bruce Springsteen rather than the title the collection has, "Greatest Hits."

With an upper limit in available CD time of 77 minutes, there are obviously only so many songs that can fit on one single release. The initial press release from Springsteen's organization listed the album as containing 16 tracks but later reports from Sony sources listed the total as 18. Taking off about 14 minutes of time for the four new tracks, that leaves roughly 63 minutes to fit the work of an artist who has scored 12 Top Ten hits and another dozen Top 40 songs.

The final list selected contains few surprises. It indeed represents Bruce Springsteen's "Greatest Hits" if you infer the word "greatest" to mean "biggest selling." If you were to list Springsteen's 12 biggest selling singles and compare them to the final selection for the *Greatest Hits* album you'd be surprised at the similarities. There are, however, a couple of notable exceptions.

First, let's look at what's on the record: Four of the tracks listed on the album were not released as singles in the US, so one assumes they were selected to give the set more diversity or balance. Those tracks are "Thunder Road," which was only released as a four-track single in Argentina (the infamous "The Boss" EP) but was indeed a huge hit on FM radio; "The River," never a single in the US though it was released in several European countries and charted as high as No. 33 in Great Britain; "Atlantic City," again not released in the US as a single but it

did come out in Canada, the UK, Holland and Japan; and "Better Days," a B-side in several countries but an A-side only in some European markets.

There are four tracks from *Born in the USA* on the *Greatest Hits* release (one fourth of the songs originally on that record); two songs each from *Born to Run* and *The River*; one each from *Darkness, Human Touch, Lucky Town, Nebraska* and *Tunnel of Love*; nothing from *Greetings, The Wild*, or *Live*. The album is rounded out by four new tracks and one track until now not available on a Bruce Springsteen album, the aforementioned "Streets of Philadelphia."

What is a "Hit"?

It's hard to know exactly the criteria used to measure sales, and without Soundscan numbers (which aren't available for the early singles) it's also difficult to weigh exactly what are Bruce's biggest hits except by using their chart position and the number of weeks they stayed on the chart. But by those standards, there are several Top Ten hits left off of the album that charted higher than others that were included. Those include "I'm on Fire," which went as high as No. 6 and stayed on the *Billboard* Top 40 for 12 weeks; "Cover Me," went as high as No. 7 and in the Top 40 for 13 weeks; "War," as high as No. 8 and nine weeks in the upper reaches of the chart; "Tunnel of Love," went as high as No. 9 and stayed in the Top 40 for 11 weeks; and finally "I'm Goin' Down," which went as high as No. 9 and stayed Top 40 for nine weeks. Three of these tracks were from *Born in the USA*, so it makes sense that Springsteen might not have wanted to have so many songs from one album on the collection (many have already argued that *Greatest Hits* has too much of *Born in the USA* since that album is the Bruce album that casual fans are most likely to already own. There are also suggestions that *Born in the USA* is most likely the next candidate within Springsteen's catalog to come out as a remastered CD). "Dancing in the Dark" and "Glory Days" were almost certain for inclusion because they were huge hits and neither was included on the *Live* album. It's interesting that both "Cover Me" and "I'm on Fire" were bigger selling hits than the "Born in the USA" single, but they were left off. There's always a chance for *Volume Two* and in fact the first title of the record on Sony internal memos (*Bruce Springsteen, Greatest Hits, Vol. One*) leaves open the possibility for another set soon to follow. "Considering the number of Top Ten hits Springsteen's had," says Neal Umphred, "I'd be highly surprised if there isn't a second collection. Sometimes the songs that didn't make the Top Ten, but were still Top 40 hits, are the best."

Stranger yet is leaving off "Tunnel of Love," and "War," both huge hits by Springsteen's standards. The next biggest selling single that didn't make the cut was another *Tunnel* track, "One Step Up," which charted at No. 13 and stayed Top 40 for eight weeks. The only other Top 20 hit Bruce had that wasn't included was "Fade Away," a tune that went to No. 20 and stayed on the charts for six weeks in the Top 40. Springsteen has scored 12 Top Ten singles over the course of his career: Only seven are on *Bruce Springsteen, Greatest Hits, Volume One.*

"Prove it All Night" rounds out Bruce's Top 40 hits not included on the set (it went to No. 33 and stayed Top 40 for two weeks). This song was a far bigger hit on FM than AM, though it still was a respectable single for Bruce. This song was originally on the list for the greatest hits release and dropped at the last moment to make room for the two additional new songs. At 4:10, it's one of Bruce's longer singles and also one that probably would have required significant remastering. Along with "Because the Night" it was rumored as a possible B-side title in Europe.

Other selections that might make a tentative list for *Volume Two* include "Blinded by the Light" and "Spirit in the Night," Bruce's first two singles and though they were very poor sellers, when covered by other artists they were Top 40 hits ("Blinded by the Light" was the first single associated with Bruce to go to No. 1, though it was Manfred Mann's version, not Bruce's); "Because the Night," Patti Smith took this to No. 13; "Fire," which charted as high as No. 46; "57 Channels," which went to No. 68; "Tenth Avenue Freeze-Out," which went to No. 83 on the *Billboard* charts. And though "Rosalita" was never officially released as a single in the US, it garnered enough FM airplay to be considered a "hit" by the same standard that includes "The River" and "Thunder Road" (see "On the Backstreets," this issue). "57 Channels" also registered on the charts for Bruce but it is not a favorite among Springsteen fans even if it did have some limited chart success.

There's one other measure that might have affected what songs were selected for the *Greatest Hits* album. As Matt Orel pointed out recently in a computer post, the lineup of the record also closely resembles the list of songs that Springsteen frequently played on the last tour. As Orel writes, "This isn't so much a 'greatest hits' collection as it is a collection of 'oldies that Bruce likes to play in concert.' It's not complete but it's pretty close." Orel points out that if you analyze the 107 performances that Bruce did in 1992/93, you'd find that "Better Days" and "Glory Days" were played at every concert; "Born in the USA" was played at 103; "Born to Run" was at 100; 'Thunder Road," 98; "Human Touch," 97; "Brilliant Disguise," 94; 'Badlands," 90; 'Hungry Heart," 60; "The River," 59; and "My Hometown" was performed at 56 shows. Only one song that was released as a single made the upper reaches of this list and did not make it on to the *Greatest Hits* album: "57 Channels." One thing is sure: If there were to be a tour behind *Greatest Hits* these are all songs that Bruce Springsteen feels comfortable playing in concert.

To Market, To Market

Another unanswered question was how much work Bruce Springsteen will do to help market this release, and how any promotional effort might affect the time spent on the upcoming studio album. It's unclear whether Bruce will do any interviews associated with the release of the new album but chances are high that he will. Over the past several years he has been much more accessible than in the past and willing to talk to radio interviewers when a song like "Born to Run" wins a poll, something that was unheard of a few years ago.

As for the *Greatest Hits* release itself, Sony will pull out all the stops to help market it. Posters and even television ads were planned for the new album. VH-1 ran a short ad for the album as early as January 25. Radio ads featuring excerpts from the hits and the new tracks were in production in mid-January.

Hardcore fans were also buoyed to learn that the release was to be issued on vinyl in a two-album set. All of Springsteen's other albums have been released on vinyl. The graphics on the double vinyl album hold the possibility for something special. The set also got an early release in Japan: It was due out on 2/23, five days before release in the US.

As for a tour that includes anything other than the awards show, none is planned and after the Grammy Awards there are no other awards that Bruce can win in his field for this song. His club-jamming activity has been at a high for the past year, so hopes are that perhaps a one time acoustic concert (like the Count Basie or Christic shows) is a possibility this season. An acoustic one-off show would allow Springsteen the opportunity to try out a different kind of concert and see how it feels to him before embarking on a full scale tour.

As for that reunion with the E Street Band that ticket scalpers in Los Angeles are already reserving space for... who knows? As Clemons said, "the studio felt real good, and I really hope it can happen again tour-wise. But who knows? Bruce is Bruce, and none of us really know what's going on with him." Meanwhile, Bruce was busier jamming with Melissa Etheridge than with the E Streeters. Though rumors continued to circulate in February, one source within Bruce's organization downplayed them. "While you never know what Bruce could come up with, there's only one tour that's being planned now—the tour to follow Bruce's new studio album in the fall."

What is clear for the time being is that three months ago no one expected a greatest hits album to come out. With the release of *Bruce Springsteen Greatest Hits*, and with an upcoming new studio album out maybe by Bruce's birthday, 1995 shapes up to be one of the most exciting periods in years for Springsteen fans.

THE BEST OF BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN Readers' Poll

When we announced a new readers' poll on the *Backstreets* subscriber hotline, it seemed like a simple one. It consisted of only one question, after all: Select 14 songs from Springsteen's catalog, released or unreleased, that represent the Best of Bruce Springsteen. The responses poured in, but the task of singling out only 14 songs from Springsteen's body of work proved to be, we were told, our "most difficult poll ever." As Joanne Volpicella wrote, "How can I objectively name 14 'best' songs when almost every song falls into this category?"

That was the main obstacle in answering the poll (and our non-restrictive question didn't help), so most readers gave themselves a few rules to follow to help narrow things down. Just about everyone felt it was necessary to have the album represent Springsteen's entire career, and most tried to include at least one song from each record. Not everyone was successful, as Mark Burns explained: "I tried to use baseball's All-Star game rule of every team being represented, but just couldn't do it (sorry, *Tunnel of Love*)." Others didn't try in the first place; John Mendez, whose most recent selections were "Open All Night" and "Nebraska," added, "I hope it's not another 13 years until he pens a song that can make my list!" But most of the lists provided a broad survey of Springsteen's catalog, and perhaps unlike the official release, all avoided *BUSA* overkill. "But by not putting more than two songs from any album on my list," one reader said, "it still just taps the surface of the albums and would encourage people to dive into Bruce's past."

A few more self-imposed restrictions tended to make things easier, and disregarding unreleased songs was often the next step. Unreleased songs were "allowed," but that made the poll an impossible task for more than a few fans. Since it *was* allowed, many couldn't resist putting one or two favorite outtakes on their lists; some, like Tom Carbonaro's proposed *Springsteen's Rarest Hits* and Bill Curtis' *Coulda Been a Contender* went all the way with nothing but outtakes. But most fans shared the sentiment of one respondent who said, "I know my list will drive everybody crazy who thinks that 'Loose Ends' and 'Frankie' should be on there, but if I consider every song there's just no way." Barclay Ericson eliminated outtakes from his list "for many reasons, the main one being that to use *any* songs would take forever." Some mentioned saving the outtakes for a boxed set.

Another tactic was making the "best of" description more specific and meaningful. While the sole rhyme and reason to *Greatest Hits* seems to be the biggest sellers (with some compensation for the *BUSA* blowout), the poll forced fans to come up with their own criteria and figure out exactly what "best" was going to mean to them. Some were just personal favorites, Desert Island Discs-style collections, like Jim O'Hara's "the 14 Bruce songs I couldn't live without." Bob Bingham picked 14 songs "which not only provide me with great amounts of enjoyment but also help me through difficult times and tough situations." Anne Bovee wrote, "This will not be strictly my 'best' list, nor will it be a list of personal favorites because I want to include something from each album. Rather, I want the list to reflect the range of Springsteen's talent, the range of his styles, and the themes central to his total work." One reader admitted, "I think being on the official *Greatest Hits* influenced me not to choose some of them."

One of the most common reservations fans expressed about a hits compilation is that it would take Springsteen's songs out of context. As Chip Gregory put it, "The problem with compiling any list of this nature is that it ignores Bruce's greatest strength as an artist. Bruce is not, essentially, a 'single song' artist. His music works best as a thematic whole." Many lists brought old songs together with a new

(continued next page, sidebar) ☞

VOL. I

Thunder Road	**244 votes**
Born to Run	**243**
Born in the USA	**155**
The River	**152**
Rosalita	**146**
Atlantic City	**144**
Badlands	**139**
Brilliant Disguise	**128**
Backstreets	**125**
Incident on 57th Street	**124**
Jungleland	**116**
Darkness	**111**
Prove It All Night	**96**
Streets of Philadelphia	**95**

•Sandy
•Rosalita
•Thunder Road
•Born to Run
•The Promised Land
•Point Blank
•The River
•Stolen Car
•Atlantic City
•Brilliant Disguise
•Tougher Than the Rest
•With Every Wish
•If I Should Fall Behind
•Roulette

Arleen Rossi
Vestal, NY

•Streets of Philadelphia *Definitely one of Springsteen's great achievements.*
•Be True *(studio) Probably the best B-side of his career, and one that should have made the final cut.*
•Roulette *Another one that should have made* The River. *I don't think Bruce and the band ever sounded better together.*
•Tunnel of Love
•Dancing in the Dark *Great lyrics, which are often overlooked in favor of the catchy tune.*
•Glory Days *This album seems full of songs whose great themes and content have been overshadowed by the immense popularity of the music. This is a great song about more than that simple baseball reference.*
•The River *I believe it to be the best example of Bruce's maturation as a songwriter.*
•Thunder Road
•Born to Run *Despite the overplay, what list would be complete without it?*
•Backstreets
•Prove It All Night
•Born in the USA *Despite the misunderstanding, this is possibly the best rock 'n' roll single of the '80s, which it helped to define.*
•Darkness *My list wouldn't be complete without this one.*

Sam Favate Jr.
Bayonne, NJ

The Life of Bruce Springsteen: A Musical Autobiography
•Prodigal Son
•Growin' Up
•Sandy
•I Wanna Be Where the Bands Are
•Thunder Road
•The Promised Land
•The Promise
•Darkness
•I'm a Rocker
•Man at the Top
•Be True
•Brilliant Disguise
•Stolen Car (Son You May Kiss the Bride)
•Human Touch
•Living Proof
•Better Days

Michael Bournazian, Jr.
Kirkland, Quebec

•New York City Serenade
•Born to Run
•Thunder Road *(9/19/78)*
•Thunder Road *(acoustic, '92-93)*
•Badlands *A song that I had a hard time understanding until after my wife passed away a year ago. Great song when you're pissed off.*
•The Promised Land
•The River *(live) One of the few highlights of the live album.*
•Wreck on the Highway *Another emotional gem—who else would do a song like this?*
•Real World *(Christic)*
•Living Proof
•Jesse *Great one from his early days, sounds like an autobiography of Bruce at the time.*
•This Hard Land
•The Promise *It's a shame this didn't make it on* Darkness, *and he'll probably never do this one live again.*
•Follow That Dream

Greg Phillips
Corona, CA

•New York City Serenade
•Thunder Road *(acoustic studio outtake)*
•Backstreets *(live 11/4/76)*
•The Promise
•Point Blank
•Highway Patrolman
•Frankie *(BUSA outtake)*
•Light of Day *(live)*
•Bobby Jean
•Trapped *(live '84)*
•Walk Like a Man
•Real World *(Christic)*
•Living Proof
•Follow That Dream *(live '92-'93)*

Kevin McClave
Syracuse, NY

•Blinded By the Light
•New York City Serenade
•Born to Run *He can't wait to get out, and yet he immortalizes the place in this fabulous song.*
•Backstreets
•Badlands *Springsteen's credo in a nutshell, a hymn to living with courage and passion.*
•Candy's Room
•The River *So simple and direct that it's stunning.*
•My Father's House
•Born in the U.S.A. *The contrast between what America could be, should be, is what sets him screaming.*
•Brilliant Disguise
•I Wish I Were Blind *Another song with a lyric so blunt as to be shocking, accompanied by a simple, beautiful melody.*
•Living Proof *It's impossible to overstate the importance of this song.*
•My Beautiful Reward
•Streets of Philadelphia *A real milestone in the promotion of tolerance.*

Anne Bovee
Philadelphia, PA

•Incident on 57th Street
•Thunder Road
•Born to Run
•Badlands
•Darkness
•The River
•Loose Ends
•Atlantic City *(electric/full band studio version)*
•Born in the U.S.A. *(eight-min. outtake)*
•Glory Days
•Brilliant Disguise
•I Wish I Were Blind
•Living Proof
•My Hometown *(Christic)*

Peter T. Church
West Simsbury, CT

•Incident on 57th Street
•Thunder Road
•Jungleland
•Independence Day *It reminds me of my own relationship with my dad.*
•Highway Patrolman
•Bobby Jean
•My Hometown *My sister and her husband moved down to Virginia for the*

VOL. II.

Human Touch	**88 votes**
Hungry Heart	**81**
Living Proof	**76**
Racing in the Street	**73**
Better Days	**68**
Tunnel of Love	**67**
Sandy	**62**
Dancing in the Dark	**60**
Glory Days	**60**
Promised Land	**56**
Growin' Up	**55**
Spirit in the Night	**53**
I Wish I Were Blind	**52**
For You	**48**

thematic structure, providing a new context such as the progression of Bruce's message or even his life. Pamela Hagler wrote, "My list does not reflect the best of Bruce in terms of commercial success, nor does it reflect my favorite 14 songs. I tried to give a sense of the story Bruce has been sharing with us for the last 25 years." Another response said: "The criteria used to make these selections were to pick what I truly felt was the best work ever produced by Bruce Springsteen, with a strong emphasis on the creativity of the lyrics, the instrumentation of the song, the general feel the song conveys, the importance of the subject matter, the impact the song had on Bruce's career, and to a much lesser extent the impact the song has had in either commercial acceptance or general public awareness and debate." Whether *that* made it any easier to narrow it down, we're not sure.

Most responses kept an audience in mind and considered how the general public would react if their set were released, as the poll proposed the situation of being "in charge" of such an album. For the most part this kept lists from being too personal, with many proposing track listings that would appeal to a general audience while still containing a few surprises. "This album should contain obvious singles in my opinion," wrote Jeff Englund. "This should be full of songs people know, not some obscure album tracks." One response said "This is kind of a half-realistic, half-fantasy list," while another described her list as "a mix of some of my favorites and some that I think are his 'best'." "Realistic" is a word that popped up a lot. Richard Pearlman said, "Rather than make it an album I (or any other *Back-*

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streets reader) would go crazy over, I've grounded it in reality. I've used only released songs that seem to form a cohesive picture of Springsteen's entire career, or total message. I feel that these songs carry the overall feeling of Springsteen's work, musically and lyrically, from his first album to his most recent. 'Streets of Philadelphia' is omitted as it seems to speak from a different point of view than Springsteen's other songs—if I got to assemble a boxed set, 'Streets' would be on it."

But even if everyone accepted—if grudgingly—the concept, the problem with the official *Greatest Hits* that remained, judging by the response to our poll, was the concentration on singles. Lack of imagination was definitely not a problem in the lists we received.

Live versions of released songs were favorites for spicing things up. A common sentiment among fans was that the best Springsteen is live Springsteen, as Christopher Caresani wrote: "*Live 1975-1985* standardized the 'greatest' Springsteen—live performance. I would have preferred a double-disc '85-95 live set." Such a set would rely heavily on the Christic shows, as did many of the songs that received votes. "Real World" in particular received a surprisingly large number of votes, but nearly all of them specified that it had to be the Christic version. "57 Channels" received only one vote, and that was for the Christic rendition as well. The live version of "Prove It All Night," almost released itself, was on several lists, and this certainly seemed like a good time to finally put that version out there. A large number of votes for "Atlantic City" specified that it should be a live, full-band version; the ☞

very same reason.
•Walk Like a Man *This song could be Springsteen's finest moment (so far).*
•One Step Up
•When You're Alone *For Bruce's finest, simplest, saddest line: "Nobody knows where love goes. But when it's gone, it's gone, gone."*
•Human Touch
•Real World *Musically, lyrically, and emotionally this song is almost perfect.*
•I Wish I Were Blind
•If I Should Fall Behind *The most beautiful wedding song ever written.*

John Durgin
Springfield, MA

•Growin' Up *"Spirit in the Night" has been a bigger part of the live shows, but this has always sounded to me like the right place to begin Bruce's story.*
•Rosalita
•Incident *Probably doesn't pass the test of being representative or important, but it is too good not to include.*
•Born to Run
•Jungleland *I could have included at least five songs from this album, but then other periods would not have been represented.*
•Badlands
•Factory *"Factory" is my favorite of all Bruce's songs about his father, a subset that needed a representative.*
•The River *For one of Bruce's best (and the longest) albums, this one doesn't feature many "essential" songs. Bruce must agree, since* The River *always seems to be underrepresented on set lists.*
•Atlantic City *(live)*
•Born in the U.S.A.
•Glory Days *"Dancing in the Dark" is a personal favorite (especially the solo version in '92), but these two songs best represent Bruce's most popular album.*
•Brilliant Disguise
•Living Proof *One of Bruce's best since the '70s.*
•The Promise *Some way, somehow, this song must see official release.*

Chris Higgerson
Springfield, IL

•Pink Cadillac
•Murder Inc.
•She's the One
•Thunder Road
•Atlantic City
•Open All Night
•Spirit in the Night
•Streets of Fire
•The Promised Land
•Cadillac Ranch
•I'm a Rocker
•Racing in the Street
•No Surrender
•The Fever

Maria DeRocher
East Hartford, CT

•Growin' Up
•Incident
•Born to Run
•Thunder Road
•Racing in the Street
•Factory
•The River
•The Price You Pay
•Mansion on the Hill
•Downbound Train
•Walk Like a Man
•I Wish I Were Blind
•Better Days
•Streets of Philadelphia

Trond Svendsen
Moelv, Norway

•For You *Certainly a natural choice to start off with, Bruce's first real "pop song."*
•Incident on 57th Street *Should have been played with the female backup singers on the last tour!*
•Thunder Road
•Because the Night
•Darkness *(from* Live*) The live version of "Darkness" is what I got for my money when I bought the* Live *box back in '86.*
•Candy's Room
•Roulette *The River should have been built around this one. Great band effort.*
•Highway Patrolman *Great storytelling, haunting.*
•Reason to Believe *As in "Highway Patrolman," Bruce asks some really hard questions and makes up great stories to build the questions around.*
•Downbound Train *This song and "My Hometown" are the only two songs on BUSA where the lyrics and melody go together.*
•Brilliant Disguise *A song it took some 40 years—and a lot of pain, I'll guess—to write. His best lyrics ever.*
•Tougher than the Rest *(live B-side) The piano version from the Christic Institute is also brilliant.*
•Born to Run *(live B-side) An emotional and triumphant celebration of his best-written song.*
•Streets of Philadelphia *When it comes to doing real work with a problematic topic, nobody does it better than Bruce. In the '80s it was Vietnam, this time it's AIDS; in both cases Bruce did his part very well.*

Stefan Jonsson
Lund, Sweden

•Thunder Road
•Backstreets
•New York City Serenade
•Born to Run
•Sherry Darling
•Badlands
•Drive All Night
•Hungry Heart
•Atlantic City
•The Price You Pay
•Incident
•Because the Night
•Jungleland
•No Surrender

Joanne Volpicella
Bronx, NY

•Born to Run *(acoustic)*
•Spirit in the Night
•Badlands
•I Wanna Marry You
•The River
•Darkness
•Atlantic City
•Tougher Than the Rest
•Born in the U.S.A.
•Two for the Road
•Rosalita
•Living Proof
•Real World
•Born to Run

Pamela Hagler
San Francisco, CA

My all-time favorites are listed below with the understanding that all are live recordings—studio does not do Springsteen justice.
•Thunder Road *(acoustic '92-93)*
•Trapped
•Badlands *Must follow "Trapped"—the two together are as powerful a duo as I have heard.*
•Who'll Stop the Rain *(live, 8/20/81)*
•Growin' Up
•Darkness
•Racing in the Street
•Backstreets
•57 Channels (*Christic*) *Before it got too serious.*
•Red Headed Woman
•Born in the U.S.A. (*acoustic 10/13/86*)
•My Beautiful Reward
•Born to Run
•Jersey Girl *6/24/93, as it tells about his "brats."*

Mary Ellen D'Entremont
Holden, MA

1. It's Hard to Be a Saint in the City (May 6,1972, take 1)	Reportedly the first song played for John Hammond. This track is taken from Springsteen's subsequent Columbia audition and typifies his early "street-poet" style.
2. Incident on 57th Street	Perhaps the finest 14:47 of Springsteen's official Columbia catalog. The juxtaposition of great songwriting and a raucous performance is breathtaking. (Also could be presented in the last known live pairing from Nassau, '80)
3. Rosalita (Come Out Tonight)	
4. Thunder Road	
5. Born to Run	
6. Jungleland	
7. Prove It All Night (Live, September 19, 1978)	Consideration was given in '78 to releasing an EP with an alternate full take of this song--Springsteen again should have followed his instincts and released this live powerhouse including piano and guitar intro.
8. Stolen Car (September 24, 1979, take 3)	This splendid arrangement easily surpasses the released studio track on The River.
9. Two Hearts	A great, overlooked performance--perhaps Van Zandt's finest moment as E - Street Band member/producer.
10. Murder Incorporated	
11. Tougher Than The Rest (Live, November 17, 1990)	An acoustic setting allows the quality of this song to shine.
12. Brilliant Disguise	
13. Real World (Live, November 16, 1990)	[see comment for track 11 above]
14. Living Proof (Live, May 9, 1992)	This rendition salvaged a somewhat uneven first night on U.S. television--truly stunning.

Peter Westphal Saint Paul, MN

The Price You Pay -- for Roy's piano and the sound of Bruce's voice on "I'm gonna tear it down and throw it awaaaay ..."

Racing in the Street -- another essential showcase for Roy; the piano sound is exquisite

Downbound Train -- easily the most under-rated BitUSA track; the simple guitar intro is one of my favorites

She's the One -- when I hear this it's late 1975 again, I'm in eighth grade, and I'm discovering Bruce for the first time

Human Touch -- a fabulous song on a much-maligned album; the crescendo after the "share a little of that human touch" section never seemed loud enough in concert, probably because I crank up the volume at that point in the song nearly every time I play the CD

Lucky Town -- for the great, fat guitar sound and killer lyrics throughout

Point Blank -- a long-time favorite that has aged well; the album version is my preference; the live acoustic doesn't work very well, in my opinion

Born to Run -- because it's the greatest rock song ever written

Light of Day (live, 1992) -- the highlight of every show I saw on the HT/LT tour

Roulette -- my call for Bruce to rock like this one does when he unveils his new stuff later this year; should never have remained in the vaults for as long as it did

Loose Ends -- I couldn't do this without including at least one unreleased gem; includes a perfect Clarence sax solo

Open All Night -- a masterpiece from an album full of them; "hey, ho, rock'n'roll deliver me from nowhere," indeed

Real World (live, November 1990) -- this version, and only this version, is certainly among Bruce's 14 best

For You (live, acoustic 1993) -- the 1993 performances reminded me of how great this song is; the best word I can think of to describe the sound of this version is "sweet"

Lisa Kroll, Raleigh, NC

•For You *Manfred Mann was in way over his head.*
•New York City Serenade *Springsteen's most underrated song. "Jungleland"'s daughter.*
•Incident
•The Fever *Will he ever play this again?*
•Born to Run *Excluding this would be like playing baseball without a ball.*
•Meeting Across the River/Jungleland *These two should* always *be played together. Why not make them one song?*
•Thunder Road
•Darkness
•Something in the Night
•The Ties That Bind
•Point Blank *'78, When Bruce sang this version in concert it was more dark and desperate. You got the feeling Bruce had a gun in his pocket and was ready to pull the trigger. He ruined it in the studio.*
•Independence Day
•Two Faces
•My Beautiful Reward

Chuck Garfien
Flossmoor, IL

•Sandy
•Incident
•Thunder Road
•Born to Run
•Jungleland
•Prove It All Night
•Hungry Heart
•Reason to Believe
•Born in the USA
•Pink Cadillac
•Dancing in the Dark
•Fire *(live)*
•Tunnel of Love
•Streets of Philadelphia

Harry Blaisure
Tacoma, WA

•Lost in the Flood
•Incident
•Born to Run
•Thunder Road
•Backstreets
•Jungleland
•Badlands
•Point Blank
•Roulette
•Reason to Believe
•Brilliant Disguise
•I Wish I Were Blind
•Streets of Philadelphia
•This Hard Land
The tone of this album would be much less upbeat than a typical greatest hits album, but I believe that Springsteen is at his best when he is writing about fear, anger, and despair.

David Farmer
Boston, MA

The Best of Bruce Springsteen
- **Born to Run** (version with double track vocals and strings)
- **Thunder Road** (alternate slow "acoustic" take)
- **Badlands** (*any* alternate take)
- **Darkness on the Edge of Town** (rockabilly guitar mix)
- **The River** (official take)
- **Stolen Car** ("Son You May Kiss the Bride" version)
- **Atlantic City** (of course the full-band version...if it exists)
- **Open All Night** (ditto)
- **Born in the USA** (the eight minute version)
- **Glory Days** (with the extra verse)
- **Tunnel of Love** (official take)
- **One Step Up** (home studio version)
- **I Wish I were Blind** (alternate take with the soulful vocal ending)
- **My Beautiful Reward** (official take...perfect)

Joseph Lahr
Keene, NH

•Born to Run *(live)*
•Thunder Road
•Badlands *(live)*
•The Promised Land
•The River
•Be True *(live)*
•Stolen Car *(outtake)*
•Open All Night
•Atlantic City
•Born in the U.S.A.
•Shut Out the Light
•Pink Cadillac
•Tunnel of Love
•Walk Like a Man
•Living Proof *(SNL)*
•Real World *(Christic)*

Christopher Phillips

Charley's "Best of Bruce Springsteen"
I've tried to take commercial considerations into account and to put together a set that could really happen (but trust me, it won't). Though our poll asked for 14 songs, Bruce used 18, so I'm taking the editor's prerogative and putting 18 on my set.
•Thunder Road *(live) The set kicks off with this stunning early version of this classic from a show at the Main Point, done in a way that it would never be played again. Long and beautiful, this would serve as a perfect introduction. Chances of ever being released on a set like this (say on* Greatest Hits, Volume II, The Best of Bruce Springsteen*): 100 to 1.*
•Rosalita *(studio) See "On the Backstreets." Chances on* Volume Two*: 1 to 2 (a sure bet).*
•Incident *(live) Brooding, long, romantic, huge in scope, representing everything that Bruce Springsteen was in the early '70s. Chances: 20 to 1.*
•The Fever *(studio) Along with "Rosie," his first big radio hit. Chances: 3 to 1.*
•Backstreets *A live version might be nice (Miami '78), but even the studio take is awesome. My favorite Bruce song and the reason for the name of this magazine. Chances: 2 to 1.*
•Born to Run *(live) Okay, it belongs on any Bruce set. But for fun let's use the live version from Love Ride XI with Jackson Browne. Chances: 1,000 to 1 (live); studio is on* Greatest Hits.
•Because the Night *(studio) Chances: B-side possibility this time around.*
•The Promise *(studio) One of Springsteen's most moving songs and one of the most misunderstood. This song's performance during the 1978 tour (solo on piano) was a highlight. Chances: 10 to 1.*
•Darkness on the Edge of Town *(studio) A song that I get more from now than when I first heard it 17 years ago. One of Springsteen's simplest tunes but most of his most eloquent. Chances: 3 to 1.*
•Prove It All Night *(live) The song was ten times better live (particularly with the long intro) and deserves "Best Of" status. Chances: 1 to 2 (studio); 10 to 1 (live).*
•The River *(live) I'd take the live version from* No Nukes. *Few songs have had such memorable debuts. Chances: 10 to 1 (live); studio is on* Greatest Hits.
•Stolen Car *(studio) Long version, outtake as found on the bootleg CD* The Ties That Bind. *Quite simply the single most emotional moment Bruce ever had in a recording studio. Chances: 1,000 to 1.*
•Losin' Kind *(studio) An often-rumored outtake from the Nebraska sessions that was a precursor to "Highway Patrolman." Inclusion on a "Best Of" would help represent the Nebraska album and showcase the "other" BUSA. A suitable studio tape may not exist. Chances: 5,000 to 1.*
•Born in the U.S.A. *(live) I'd take the live version from the Bridge show. Chances: 100 to 1.*
•Follow That Dream *(studio) This outtake, which has been revived at several times during Bruce's history, is a gorgeous song, and the type of slow mid-tempo number that Bruce does so well in the studio and then chickens out on when it comes to release time. Chances: 25 to 1.*
•Tunnel of Love *A beautiful song and one of Bruce's best singles, though not one of his best selling. Chances: 1 to 2.*
•One Step Up *My favorite tune off of Tunnel, a melancholy single that stays with you long after the music has faded away. Chances: 2 to 1.*
•Real World (live) *By using the Christic Institute version, Springsteen would help illustrate the acoustic side of his career (and give us a little real unplugged action) but also would reference* Human Touch. *Chances: 20 to 1.*
•Thunder Road *(live) I'd use the Christic take again, one of the most magnificent performances in Bruce's career. From "Thunder Road" at the Main Point to "Thunder Road" at the Christic Show, the best of Bruce Springsteen has always been about risk, innovation and challenges.*

Charles R. Cross

The Worst of Bruce Springsteen?

While the process of elimination doesn't fairly make these the "worst" (and so many people wrote that all *of his songs were the "greatest,") the following album tracks did not receive a single vote.*
•Mary Queen of Arkansas
•The Angel
•Kitty's Back
•Wild Billy's Circus Story
•Crush on You
•Working on the Highway
•Cover Me
•Ain't Got You
•Cautious Man
•All or Nothin' At All
•Cross My Heart
•Man's Job
•The Long Goodbye
•Real Man
•Pony Boy
•The Big Muddy
•Book of Dreams
•Souls of the Departed

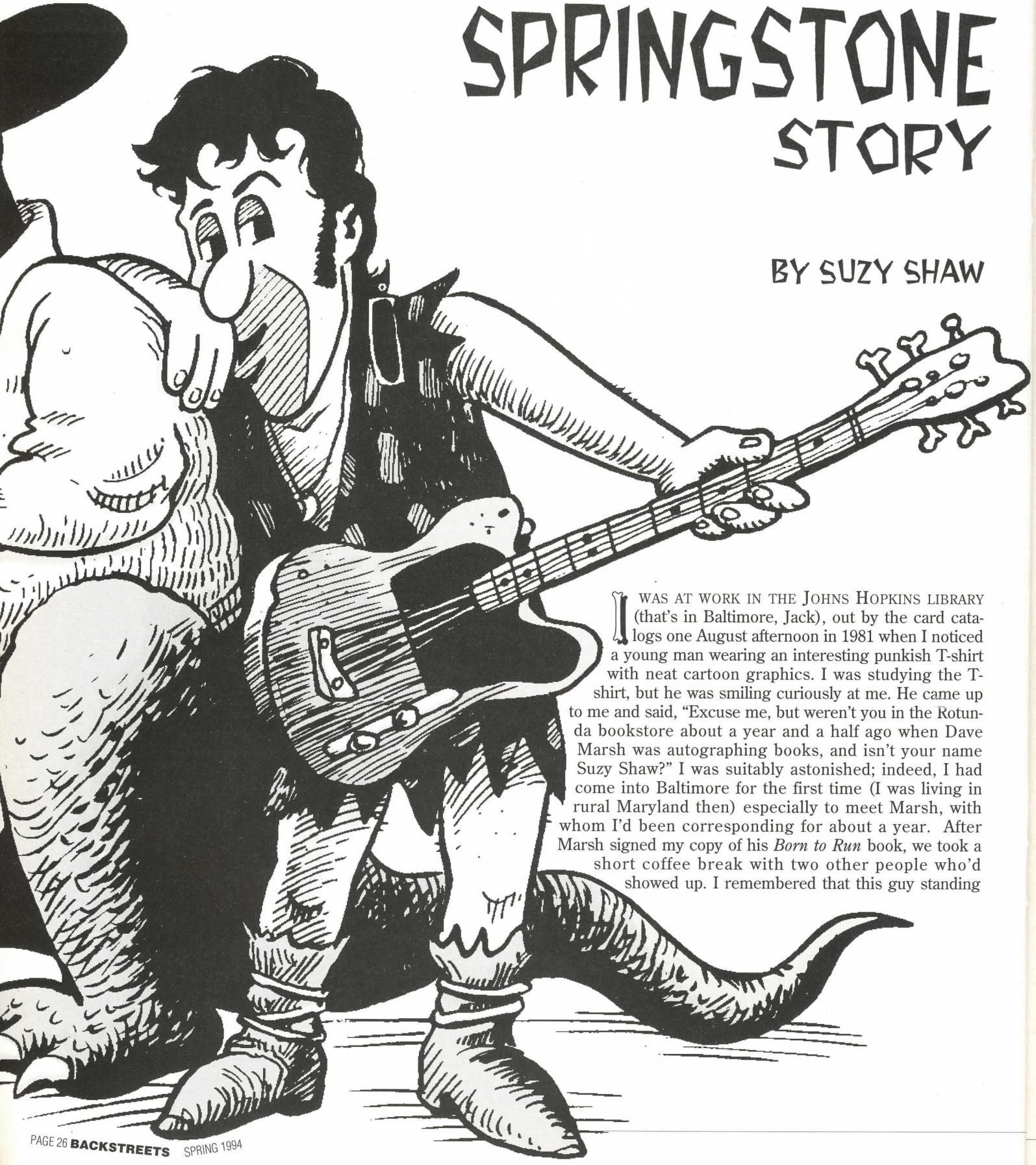
more wishful thinkers wanted an electric studio take. Jeff Blum even worked in some band intros, closing his list with "'Rosalita,' a live recording with full E Street Band introductions from either the *Darkness* or *River* tour." Some suggested more imaginative titles for the album itself, such as *Glory Days: The Best of Bruce Springsteen* or *Bruce Springsteen: Classics* to better capture the feel of the material.

Despite the wide variety of answers to our poll—only 18 of Bruce's album tracks were not chosen by anyone, and there were more than 50 outtakes and B-sides that received votes—the Final 14 list is surprisingly close to the actual *Greatest Hits*. The main difference is the stress placed upon earlier songs by *Backstreets* readers. Part of the reason for the similarity is that a good deal of those songs were "must-haves" for voters, so the votes added up; while the slots that readers saved for anything but the "classics" tended to be scattered over such a broad base of songs that they weren't reflected in the final tally. But we've shown as many individual lists as we could fit to show the variety of track listings we received, and we've listed the top 28 according to the votes—a strong *Best of Bruce Springsteen* 2-CD set. Many readers included lists of "Honorable Mentions" that weren't reflected in the voting—a few that were longer than their "Best of" lists. One frustrated response read, "If this was an exercise to show how difficult it is to select only 14 songs from a library of many, well, you proved your point. It was very difficult." But as Mark Scully wrote after deliberating over his list, "Being the 15th best Bruce song ain't no crime."

—Christopher Phillips

THE BRUCE SPRINGSTONE STORY

BY SUZY SHAW



I WAS AT WORK IN THE JOHNS HOPKINS LIBRARY (that's in Baltimore, Jack), out by the card catalogs one August afternoon in 1981 when I noticed a young man wearing an interesting punkish T-shirt with neat cartoon graphics. I was studying the T-shirt, but he was smiling curiously at me. He came up to me and said, "Excuse me, but weren't you in the Rotunda bookstore about a year and a half ago when Dave Marsh was autographing books, and isn't your name Suzy Shaw?" I was suitably astonished; indeed, I had come into Baltimore for the first time (I was living in rural Maryland then) especially to meet Marsh, with whom I'd been corresponding for about a year. After Marsh signed my copy of his *Born to Run* book, we took a short coffee break with two other people who'd showed up. I remembered that this guy standing

in front of me now was the one who had spoken to me kindly in that otherwise nerve-wracking situation.

His name was Craig Hankin. We immediately started talking as if we were long lost soul mates, which in a way, we were. He was teaching studio art at Hopkins, writing music criticism for a local paper, had been in a rock 'n' roll band for a while, and lived right in my neighborhood. We'd both been at two recent Cap Centre Springsteen gigs and incredibly, the woman who danced so torridly with Bruce during "Crush on You" the first night was one of his closest friends.

Knowing Craig made life in Baltimore immeasurably sweeter. He thought it was spectacular that I'd seen Elvis Presley live when I was in high school, and introduced me to people as "This is Suzy Shaw— she saw Elvis live in '56." It's great to have someone do your bragging for you.

Craig began inviting me over to little impromptu music-making sessions with his friends, mostly just singing along with Craig's very fine rocking acoustic guitar— Beatles, Elvis Costello, some of his old band's stuff. The band, which had broken up about a year earlier, was called The Reason. Craig and the singer, Tom Chalkley, wrote most of the stuff, a kind of latter day Lennon-McCartney style, tightly constructed, hooky pop songs with clever lyrics. Out of one of these sessions an idea for a kind of music/comedy "review" emerged, which Craig, Tom and Jimmy Owen performed at the Hopkins Rathskeller on St. Patrick's day, 1982. The show was very successful, but the show stopper was Tom's Springsteen impression, doing a rocked-up version of "The Flintstones" theme, complete with an opening monologue ("...coming home from work one day in a little stone-age town... lunch pail... called out to my wife... WILLLLLLMMMMMA!!!"). The crowd loved it.

The guys put on basically the same show as an opening act for comedian Robert Klein when he played during Hopkins' Spring Fair, and once again, "Flintstones" laid them in the aisles. Two deejays, one from Baltimore and one from DC (Howard Stern, before he became infamous) were in the audience, and they encouraged Tom and Craig to make a record or tape of it, and said they'd play it on the air. When Tom came up with the idea of doing "Take Me Out to the Ballgame" a la Springsteen as the flip side and wanted a ballpark-style organ, I volunteered my little electronic keyboard which had a pretty good organ sound. At this point it was just the three of us. Then Craig contacted the owner of a tiny local record company and played a rough tape for him. The guy flipped. He offered us a deal with his record label (Clean Cuts), but insisted that we get a full band sound so it would fit in on mainstream radio— he was sure it would be a hit.

THERE IS NO MONEY IN HIT SINGLES, however. Album sales are where it's at, and most record companies consider singles to be little more than ads for albums (much as videos have become), so naturally Clean Cuts wanted an album as part of the deal. We were dubious, however, as we considered the Springsteen parody to be a one-line joke that would not bear many repetitions. "After all," I said to Craig when he told me about the album option, "who would want to listen to an entire album of Bruce Springstone?" "Bruce Springstone! I like it!" he replied, and so the character came by his name. The band itself never did have a name, though I thought The Bedrockers had a nice ring to it.

Suddenly I found myself playing in a rock 'n' roll band for the first time in my life. It was like a dream come true. The band consisted of Tom on vocals; Craig on rhythm guitar; John Ebersberger, an artist now living in Annapolis, on drums; Gabor Lutor, another veteran of The Reason, on bass; and me. I learned the pieces quickly from a tape, added some Springsteen-esque riffs and figures to "Ballgame" and came up with an idea for an organ line under the monologue so I could play on both sides. It came easily, but who would know this stuff better than a fanatic like me? We had a couple of rehearsals in a garage, and it was about the most fun I had ever had.

Jack Heyrman, owner of Clean Cuts and our producer, decided we couldn't really sound like Springsteen unless we had a sax, and a good one at that. We decided to hire a pro, and were lucky to find Ron Holloway, who was with Gil Scott-Heron's band. And at the last minute, Craig decided he just wasn't confident enough of his own lead guitar, so he talked Tommy Keene (who had just gotten his first record contract) into sitting in.

We found a studio we could afford, Hit & Run, operated by this 18-year old kid in the basement of his parents' home in rural Maryland. We spent 16 hours over a weekend in June 1982 cutting the record. It was fun, but arduous, quite an education. There was much frustration and compromise. Hit & Run was only equipped with four tracks, which meant that I did not have a track to myself, but was "mixed down" with the drums and bass. What I considered my best riff eventually got lost in the final mix and by the time I realized and complained about it, it was too late. There were other things that were rendered "unfixable" as well, so I really understand why Bruce takes so much time in the studio; as he's said, "Once a record's out there, you gotta live with it, it's like your hair shirt." I now have tons of respect for anyone who can put out a decent sounding recording.

One of the last things we did was record that "Rosalita"-like vocal/clapping break in "Ballgame." So few of the band were still hanging around who could sing that I got drafted to be one of the "guys," making my voice as deep as I could. That's still one of my favorite moments of either song. While doing this, we were joking around that we were making rock 'n' roll history, and how even though "Flintstones" was the a-side, fans would turn it over and "Ballgame" would become a classic in its own right. In many ways, it is the better record. The verses really are from the original song— it was a happy accident that such a quintessential Springsteen story was buried there just waiting to be rediscovered.

WE'D OF COURSE GOTTEN PERmission from Hanna-Barbera to use "Flintstones" (one of them, I forget which, had collapsed on his couch laughing at the idea) and we'd heard through Dave Marsh that Jon Landau, Bruce's manager, had laughed so hard he got tears in his eyes and thought it might be good for Bruce to be lovingly kicked in the ass, as he'd been down-headed and overly serious lately. Also, one of Bruce's roadies was nicknamed Barney Flintstone, so the Bedrock consciousness was close to the center of things in the entourage.

Craig and Tom are both gifted cartoonists who had a long running strip named "On the Corner" in Baltimore's *City Paper*, but John Ebersberger is at least their equal. He drew a cartoon for the picture sleeve of the record that parodied the *Born to Run* album cover, with

Clarence as Dino, as well as one for the back of the sleeve showing Bruce/Fred in baseball uniform sliding into home plate clutching an electric guitar. Tom designed a Cold Cuts label for the record; it was supposed to be the first of a line of novelty records for Clean Cuts. Actually, I think Jack just wanted make sure and hedge his bets against someone suing the main label!

Finally, there was nothing to do but wait. But just one week before it was released in the Fall of '82, something astonishing happened. Out of the blue, Bruce released *Nebraska*. As were all Bruce's fans, we were dumbfounded by this daring move. It was as if the Bruce we were parodying had suddenly ceased to exist, and we were embarrassed at what we had done. The two were often cited in the same review, and one writer said "Anyone devoted enough to follow Springsteen through the tortured ruminations of *Nebraska* owes it to himself to hear *Live at Bedrock*...." We now knew what Landau had meant about Bruce taking things seriously these days.

WE KNEW THAT WHAT WE HAD done was good, but we were not prepared for the reception the record got. There was no advertising at all. Normally record labels have to fight to get airplay, but with this record, it was just sent out to radio stations and they played it. Who could resist that picture sleeve? And just like in the rock 'n' roll legends, response to airplay was instant. The *Washington Post* reported that "When a Philadelphia station played it after simply announcing, 'Now the record you've all been waiting for,' the phones lit up for hours, with fans arguing whether it really was the Boss of not." This story was repeated over and over.

It never occurred to us that the record's very existence would be newsworthy, but it was written up in *USA Today, Philadelphia Inquirer, Los Angeles Times, New York Post, Chicago Reader* and many others in addition to spreads in all the local papers. All the radio trades recommended it. *Billboard* made it a Top Single Pick the week of October 30. It was reviewed in *Musician* and *Record* magazines. Greil Marcus named it in the *Village Voice* "Pazz & Jop Product Report" of November 9. Dr. Demento wrote to the L.A. distributor saying he had featured it three weeks in a row on his Sunday night show and the response was excellent, and it would be on his syndicated show. The praise for the record was unanimous. At the height of the phenomenon, it had been added to the play lists of over 100 radio stations, and a number of them added the "Ballgame" side as well. There was even talk of an appearance on *Late Night with David Letterman*.

Of course, we had some experiences with the downside of publicity. Craig had waxed a little too loquacious to Howard Smith of the *Village Voice* when talking about how the idea came to him and Tom, telling him they'd been "sitting around smoking dope and bullshitting" one evening after a playing a gig. Smith printed this line and entitled his *Scenes* column of October 26 "Springstoned." He also quoted Craig as saying "We're big fans of his; we love him. We even have dozens of his bootleg tapes." Since it was Smith who'd had the idea of the Letterman date, that idea was shelved.

I honestly can't remember the first time I heard it on the radio, but I began to hear from friends all around the country that they were catching it on the airwaves. Memorial Stadium, home of the Baltimore Orioles, started playing "Ballgame" at the ballpark. One night I heard it on a jukebox in a Charles Street bar. Our producer, Jack Heyrman, was quoted as saying that the way he felt the first time he heard it on a jukebox was the closest thing to nirvana he ever expected to come; it had been his dream since childhood to hear something he had been responsible for on a jukebox. One of my favorite reactions came from the 11-year-old daughter of a friend of mine who loved Bruce. She had been so sure that it was Bruce that she cried when she was made to realize it wasn't.

Of course, we were all dying to know what Bruce thought of it. Dave Marsh told us that Jon Landau liked it, but that no one had the nerve yet to play it for Bruce. Clarence Clemons played a show at Hopkins November 11. He was quoted by J.D. Considine in the *Baltimore Sun* as saying "I thought it was funny as hell. The guy sounds like Bruce.... I don't know how Bruce feels about it," laughing as he spoke. He also said he kind of thought of his sax sound "as being a dinosaur. The awesomeness of the sound, the impact. Not as a vicious, man-eating animal, but something big with a lot of muscle." Craig and I managed to get backstage to meet Clarence before that show. Craig gave him one of the nifty T-shirts we'd had made up with the picture sleeve cartoon on it, and Clarence was photographed holding the 12-inch version of the record and strangling Craig! (That picture later appeared in *Billboard*.) Another picture was taken with Clarence holding up the T-shirt and smiling. I was almost too shy to say anything, but when I finally did, I told him I'd played the organ on the record. He said, "You bad girl!" with a delightful twinkle in his eye.

We heard rumors about Bruce's reaction. A friend of a friend of our L.A. distributor said Bruce thought it was "cute." Not my favorite word in the English language, but definitely better than "I'll see you in court!" Another rumor had it that Bruce wore a Fred Flintstone costume to a Halloween party. And still another story says that Max Weinberg was in a taxi going to the studio in New York when he heard it on the cab's radio. He made the cabby stop while he dashed into a record store to buy a copy. He put it on in the studio without a word to anyone and the whole band fell down laughing, including Bruce. It seemed unlikely by this time that he had not heard it, and one day it hit me full force: My god, Bruce has heard me play! There'd always been that ultimate fantasy of playing with the band, but never in my wildest dreams did I imagine I would actually make music that Bruce himself would hear. It boggles my mind to this day.

MTV WAS JUST GETTING STARTED IN those days and was desperate for material. They actually approached us about doing a video, so we decided to do one. Tom and Craig threw together a storyboard, Jack hired a director, and the mother of one of our friends did the costumes, wonderful fake fur jobs.

We assembled at Craig's house at 6 a.m. on December 6 to get into costumes and makeup. From there we went to Genstar Quarry, a lovely, dramatic site outside the Baltimore Beltway to the northeast where, with only the roughest of script outlines, we filmed all day. One bit of strangeness was that Craig was playing Bruce Springstone (even though it was actually Tom who had done the vocals on the record) because he looked much more like the real Bruce. But what made it really bizarre was that the local crew of CBS's *Evening Magazine* was there filming us filming it! The most fun came when we filmed the band's performance

footage. We really had our instruments there (except for the sax, of course— Clarence was portrayed by J.D. in full dinosaur drag) and played along with the record. We finished up the shoot in the evening in a drugstore that had a diner-like soda fountain for a dinoburger flipping scene; they also shot footage of my hands playing the organ intro, which was to be the opening shot.

Before editing of the video could even begin, disaster struck. The marketing people at Hanna-Barbera started freaking out when they realized how popular the record was becoming; they were afraid that the association of sex-drugs-rock'n'roll with the Flintstones would harm their image for their kiddy vitamin empire. Though we had permission to use the song, they claimed we did NOT have permission to use the word "Bedrock" and that any cartoon depiction of a dinosaur violated their trademark on Dino. These were pretty silly threats, but with a big corporation like that threatening to sue Clean Cuts back to the stone age, we had to take it seriously. No more picture sleeves. No more T-shirts. No more promotion of any kind. And above all, no more video. *Evening Magazine* did air their TV feature in the Baltimore area as scheduled (it was excellent), but we asked them not to release it for syndication elsewhere. End of story.

WELL, NOT QUITE. MARSHALL Crenshaw played Hopkins the Spring of 1983. It seems he was a fan of the record, and asked us to open for him (open for his opening act, that is— Evan John and the H-Bombs), so I got to play my one and only live gig. The performance was a great experience for me— not too many novices play to an audience that's screaming for them when they hit the stage. We did both numbers, and the crowd loved us. To my ears, the live performance put the recorded one to shame.

Strange little aftershocks keep happening, even after I moved from Baltimore to Florida. I went to a record show looking for Bruce stuff and heard "Ballgame" being played; a crowd had gathered around to hear it. I occasionally see copies of the 12" single in alternative record store boot bins. Dr. Demento included "Flintstones" on his compilation set, *The Greatest Novelty Hits of All Times.* And "Ballgame" even made it to CD when it was included in Rhino Records' *Baseball's Greatest Hits*, where it goes on to this day fooling people into thinking Springsteen once performed it.

A friend of mine in Detroit wrote to tell me that she'd been to a Tigers game where they showed a feature on Diamond-Vision about baseball fans, with our "Ballgame" used as a sound track. I was thrilled by this and wrote to Craig—he and Jack were not amused. Major League Baseball had not gotten permission to use it. Craig told me later MLB was very embarrassed by being caught doing this. As part of the out of court settlement, Clean Cuts was given a private box at Orioles games for life. Recently, someone on an Internet mailing list recognized my name from a post and sent me e-mail asking, "Are you *the* Suzy Shaw...?" I've become a footnote in rock 'n' roll history!

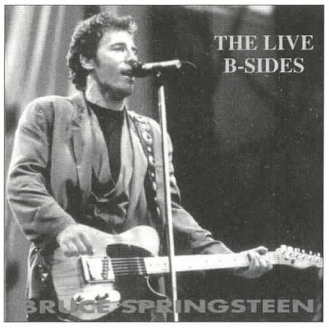
Did Bruce ever hear it? We hated not knowing. Several years after the fact, Craig wrote Bruce a letter telling him we hoped he knew we meant him no disrespect and that we considered what we had done to be a very loving and admiring tribute. We were still worrying about it, and would have really appreciated it if he could have given us some sign that it was okay with him and he understood. An SASE was enclosed in the letter. Craig didn't hear anything for a long time and forgot all about it until one day a postcard came (not the envelope) written and addressed in Bruce's hand: "The record is great! I love it! Keep on rockin! Bruce Springsteen."

ON COLLECTING

By Lynn Elder, Richard Breton, and Jeff McDermott

For the benefit of our readers, *Backstreets* magazine provides ratings of unauthorized releases currently in circulation. Don't write us asking where these can be obtained. *Backstreets* in no manner, shape, or form endorses these recordings. These reviews are provided by our columnists solely for informational purposes. Despite these words of warning, some collectors will still seek this material out, and for those collectors, our reviews should help you steer clear of the real losers.

Unauthorized CDs are growing in numbers and with that growth, expect some real ripoffs—our advice is let the buyer beware, and demand to listen to material before you buy it. Each title here has been rated for packaging, performance, and sound quality on a scale from one to ten, one being awful, and ten being quality generally found on legitimate releases.



• **The Live B-Sides**
(Sin Music)
Packaging: 6
Sound Quality: 9
Performance: 7

First there was *Another Side of Bruce Springsteen* which collected all of the previously officially released studio tracks that were only found on various vinyl 45 and CD single B-sides (as well as several tracks found on CD compilations). *The Live B-Sides* takes the same idea and issues only the tracks from B-sides and compilations, though the title is somewhat of a misnomer since the bootleggers fail to collect all the live B-sides. Serious collectors despise these "pirate" releases because they've spent good money to accumulate these recordings legitimately.

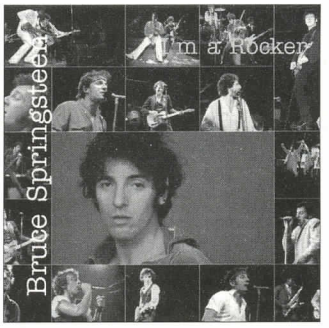
"Santa Claus is Coming to Town" has been released as a vinyl radio station promo and on a vinyl compilation of children's songs, but it also surfaced as a CD single B-side to "Tunnel Of Love" in late '88, which is where they mercifully take it from. Not so for "Merry Christmas Baby" which is mysteriously taken from a not-so-clean sounding vinyl B-side and is also at a lower volume! The rest of the tracks were all taken from CD sources, and with the exception of "Remember When the Music" and "Trapped," are all from CD EPs or B-sides from 1988 to 1994.

Plenty is missing (*No Nukes*, B-side of "Jersey Girl," *Unplugged* B-sides). All this title has to offer is a gathering of most live B-sides in one place and at a cheaper price than trying to collect all the CDs or CD singles these tracks originated from. But since a great many of these tracks are still officially available, and many fans already have most of what's on this disc already, and some of the official CDs benefit *charities*, it's hard to recommend this pirate. This label is called Sin Music, but you wonder if it's a sin to support this project rather than the charities that Bruce originally intended you support with the official releases.

• **Movie of '71**
(Teddy Bear Records)
Packaging: 5
Sound Quality: 8
Performance: 9

Steel Mill fans that missed the hard to find *Goin' Back in the Past* CD will want to get this re-issue which is a copy of the same show. The quality is not much different, slightly brighter and hissier. The packaging is slightly inferior, although the original was nothing special either.

The band at this point featured Bruce on guitar and vocals, Robbin Thompson on vocals, Steve Van Zandt on bass, Danny Federici on organ and Vini Lopez on drums. A small portion of this set appeared on the original vinyl *All Those Years* retrospective and an even smaller portion appeared on the five CD re-issue. The complete set is included here and the quality is better than *All Those Years*. This is one of the best Steel Mill shows on boot though I'd still recommend the Matrix set to fans wanting to check out this era.



• **I'm A Rocker**
(Ottawa Records)
Packaging: 6
Sound Quality: 8
Performance: 9

Toronto has been one of the those cities that has always had a special relationship with Bruce Springsteen. Some Canadian fans argue that you'll always find the best Bruce shows in Canada in Toronto, and it's the one city he almost always seems to play. This tape is from one of Bruce's legendary Toronto stints at the Maple Leaf Gardens on January 20, 1981. The tape has been in circulation for a while and most bootleggers probably have passed on it because the tape is incomplete and has some dropouts. But as River-era boots go this one is exceptional because the sound is excellent (with a few snags) and the show was spectacular.

There are some problems with the sound here (the set starts right in the *middle* of "Fourth of July, Asbury Park (Sandy)" if you can imagine that) but that shouldn't deter you. The quality of most of the tracks is excellent and though you're basically getting the last 13 songs of the show, at 77 minutes this isn't a bad value (and unlike the *Born in the USA* shows, the *River* shows ended with a bang, not a whimper).

Best of the set is a killer version of "Point Blank" which along with "Stolen Car" and "Wreck on the Highway" make a nice *River* sampler. The set is appropriately titled: "I'm a Rocker" has the best sound and it is an exceptional version of the song (though some diehards might argue that's not saying much). "Jungleland" follows and the quality and performance is as good as you can find on a *River*-era boot.

The rumor has long been that this soundboard tape made its way into collector's circles because it was in a crew member's car during service. It's hard to know if that legend is really true, but one can only hope that one day the other half of the show is stuck in a cassette when some Bruce tramp repairperson happens on it.

• **Liberty Hall, March 9 & 11, 1974**
(Mistral Music)
Packaging: 6
Sound Quality: 7
Performance: 10

This CD won't change Mistral's reputation as this is yet another very good CD that has too many flaws to make the five star mark. A subsidiary of Yellow Dog, Mistral has a knack for releasing interesting material that usually has either poorer than normal sound quality or sound flaws. And so far everything on this label has had abysmal packaging. This CD is no exception, though the performance is exceptional. As usual, the packaging is the worst thing about this Mistral release: the few photos on the covers are from a couple decades after the performance!

The sound here is good and bad: it is very dynamic and obviously taken from a stereo soundboard but somehow the tape has hiss, dropouts, muffled sections, digital scratches and stereo dropouts. These problems far exceed the normal allowance made for bootlegs which might be why no other label has bothered with this tape.

The prime redeeming feature of this sub-standard source tape is the incredible 20-year-old performances documented within. Rarely is "Ride on Sweet William" on boot and here it is superb, complete with a harmonica and acoustic guitar introduction. Both this song and "Thundercrack" are in better quality than any of the other songs.

One reason to buy this set is that most of the material has not been bootlegged before. A portion of the March 9 show appeared on the *Lone Star Comes to Texas* vinyl boot and a few songs from the March 11 show were found on *All Those Years* but this

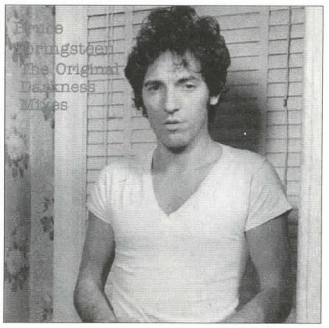
set represents a "best of" compilation of the various songs performed at the tremendous Liberty Hall stand. Bruce is definitely moving away from the funkier arrangements into a harder rock sound with the addition of Boom Carter to the band and even allows a big drum solo in "Rosalita." "Blinded by the Light" is inspired and unusually played. The liner notes tell us that The Fever" was played live for the first time at this show but the *Lost Radio Show* boot, recorded the day before, has the song in much better sound quality.

• **2nd Night at the Capitol Theater**
(Winged Wheel)
Packaging: 6
Sound Quality: 8
Performance: 8

In September 1978, Bruce played three nights at the Capitol Theater in Passaic, New Jersey. The first night, September 19, is the most famous because it was broadcast on the East Coast on several FM stations. A definitive CD bootleg version of this broadcast was released as *Piece de Resistance*. The third night, September 21, has also been released from a terrific, albeit incomplete, soundboard tape source as *The Bosses Birthday Party*. Now we have a boot of the September 20 show, also from a soundboard tape. In fact, if one takes all the CD and/or video boots of these particular shows in existence, including the soundchecks, this three night stand is probably the best documented series of shows in Bruce history.

Sound-wise, this is not quite as good as either other boot from the series. There's more tape hiss, and much less stereo separation which at some points sounds like mono, though the sound does get better over the length of this set. Also, this boot is missing some songs performed since the tape used did not contain complete versions of "Prove It All Night," "Incident on 57th Street," or the final encore of "Twist and Shout." Performance-wise, Bruce and the band are loose but also seem to make more than the usual number of mistakes: missed cues, bum notes, missed beats, etc. You'd never guess the previous night's performance was so tight.

As for the packaging, the CDs are packaged in a dual-folded cardboard eco-pack. The discs themselves are designed to resemble vinyl records, with blue center labels containing the title and assorted info printed in a rather small area.



• **The Original Darkness Mixes**
(E Street Records)
Packaging: 7
Sound Quality: 8-10
Performance: 10

The quality on this disc is exceptional which is exactly what you'd expect from studio outtakes taken directly from acetates. But before you get too excited about this release, remember that most of these acetates are remarkably similar to the released album. And though the sound quality here is top-notch, so is the quality on your official *Darkness* CD (or better yet, your *Darkness* vinyl half-speed master).

There are only a couple of songs on this set that will interest anyone but the anal-retentive collector. "Don't Look Back" kicks the CD off and this song is explosive: one of the most powerful of all of Bruce's outtakes and a tune that would have perfectly fit on this album (it was on final acetates for the LP and mysteriously was deleted at the last minute for reasons that have never been clear). Beyond this outtake, what you get is a different guitar solo here and there, an occasional different mix and one or two different drum tracks. Remember this set is only billed as "the Original *Darkness* mixes" so don't expect different songs. For the most part these tunes are about as different from the actual album as those tracks on *Prodigal Son* were different from the released songs: Unless you're an engineer, you're probably not going to notice.

In deference to this boot, the producers have done an enviable job of producing a CD with great dynamic range and apart from spelling Bruce's roadie's name as "Mike Batlant," they haven't messed anything up. The set ends with alternative versions of "Spanish Eyes," "Sherry Darling," and "Streets of Fire" that aren't from the original acetates and these outtakes are very different and worth hearing (though they are in much poorer sound quality than the other tracks). There are some remarkable *Darkness* outtakes that have never been bootlegged but until that day comes, if you're into "mixes" you'll find this a worthy addition to your collection.

• **Pretty Flamingo**
Packaging: 6
Sound Quality: 7
Performance: 10

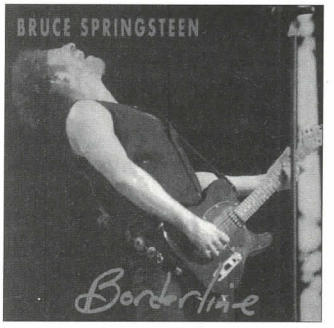
It was 1978, a banner year for Bruce. He played his guts out every single night, and he always left the audiences gasping for breath and reporters grasping for superlatives. For many, the adjectives to describe this tour have yet to be invented. There was less than two weeks left to go for this legendary tour when Bruce entered the Seattle Center Arena on December 20th.

This was also a banner year for the bootleggers. Between the many FM broadcasts and various soundboard tapes that have become available of this tour, there's already a plethora of great boots from this tour. Now that these high quality sources have been pretty much exhausted, it appears that a few audience tapes are beginning to leak out. Unfortunately, this isn't the best audience tape of this tour, which becomes quite apparent at the third song.

The source tape used was incomplete, so the first two songs are actually from an audience tape from the previous night's performance at the Paramount in Portland, Oregon, which yielded arguably the best sounding audience tape of the tour. The Seattle show tape pales by comparison.

The tape hiss is low, but the high-end is missing for the most part. Still, anyone with a treble knob can easily rectify this situation somewhat. The tape sound varies over the show, you can almost tell when the sides of a tape change, and some parts sound better than others. There are other minor tape problems that sound like the tape azimuth was misaligned changing from one side of a tape to another.

I could go on about the performance, but anyone with the first edition of *Backstreets* magazine or a copy of the book *Backstreets, Springsteen: The Man and His Music* can read a first person account of the show.



• **Borderline**
(Human Records)
Packaging: 5
Sound Quality: 5
Performance: 7

Most American boot collectors probably won't understand why this set even exists: It's only an average audience recording of an average 1993 European show from some huge outdoor stadium (Gijon, Spain). That stadium was filled with rabid Springsteen fans, all of whom seemed to want to clap during the entire show.

It's easier to think of this boot as you would a commemorative program of the show: Those thousands of fans who attended the show get this as their document. And with liberal laws in Europe concerning distribution of bootlegs (and cheap prices), you'd probably want this boot too if you attended this show.

To be fair, this audience recording is above average though the crowd is noisy during much of the show (thankfully they are relatively quiet—with the exception of the incessant hand-clapping—on "Across the Borderline" and "Atlantic City," the two highlights). The show is better than most of the US dates with hot takes of "Because the Night," "Many Rivers to Cross" and "Who'll Stop the Rain." The packaging is okay but you'll be surprised to see the date listed as 5/7/94, meaning that this would be one of the only dates Bruce played in 1994 with the 1992/93 band. You might also find errors like that in a commemorative program.

Everywhere you look now

"Murder Inc." hits radio

It may not be the new album anyone was expecting, but *Bruce Springsteen's Greatest Hits* suddenly emerged on compact disc, cassette, and a two-record vinyl set. Of the four new tracks on the album, "Secret Garden" and "Murder Incorporated" have been pegged as singles—Sony had plans to shoot videos for both in late February and early March—and different countries may be releasing one or the other as the first single.

While "Murder Incorporated" was to have its broadcast premiere via satellite on February 15, radio beat the label to the punch. On February 10 the song was leaked to New York's Z100, which immediately put the song into not just heavy but *constant* rotation. Keep an eye out for promotional CDs—a promo disc of "Murder Incorporated" was officially scheduled to go to radio in the US on February 16, and a digipack promo picturing all the European sleeves is also planned—and check this column in the next issue of *Backstreets* for a complete rundown of new and collectible discs from *Greatest Hits*.

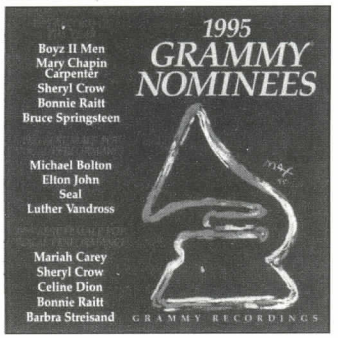
While the new record is most notable to fans for the four previously unreleased tracks, it's also the first Springsteen album to contain "Streets of Philadelphia." In addition to the *Philadelphia* soundtrack and *Greatest Hits*, "Streets of Philadelphia" now appears on two more full-length collections. A recent Sony compilation, *1995 Grammy Nominees*, collects this year's Grammy nominees, including all nominated tracks in three Grammy Award categories: Record of the Year, Best Male Pop Vocal Performance, and Best Female Pop Vocal Performance. The album is being released in conjunction with the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences under a new imprint, Grammy Recordings, and portions of the proceeds from sales are to benefit the NARAS Foundation programs for archive and preservation initiatives.

A boxed set of award-winning songs might have most thinking "Grammys," but there have been enough Oscar-winning songs over the years to fill five compact discs. This is exactly what Rhino has done with *The Envelope Please....Academy Award Winning Songs (1934-1993)*. Rhino's tribute covers 50 years of the Oscars, which culminated with "Streets of Philadelphia." Perhaps in anticipation of their own compilation, Columbia wouldn't license Springsteen's version of the song for inclusion. Instead, a version of "Streets" commissioned from Richie Havens completes the set. According to *ICE* Newsletter, the five CDs will be available separately one year after the release of the boxed set.

Bruce enters the interactive age on a mega-bizarre promotional CD-I from Holland titled *Mega Popclassics*. "Glory Days" is one of the ten featured tracks. The only video is a live clip from Golden Earring, but Springsteen is one of the 50 artists included in the Megafile—biographies, discographies, etc. accessible with a CD-I player.

Always a favorite around Christmas time, Springsteen's yuletide tracks have been compiled onto yet another Columbia holiday sampler CD. The name has changed a little, but it's the same story; collectors of B-sides on official CDs can try to get their hands on *The Return of Sampler Claus: Hits From the North Pole*. The new promotional CD is especially worth tracking down, as it contains both "Santa Claus is Coming to Town" and "Merry Christmas Baby." Previous seasonal promos from Columbia with Springsteen material include *Sampler Claus* and *'Tis the Sampler*.

In the spirit of giving, Springsteen once again lent a hand to the T.J. Martell Foundation, this time contributing a song to a benefit CD. The song included is "I'm a Rocker," perhaps not one of Springsteen's best tracks, but it fits in with the theme of *The Ultimate Rock Album*, compiling songs with "rock" in the title from Led Zeppelin, Tom Petty, John Mellencamp and others.



Clockwise from left: 1995 Grammy Nominees, *the Sony/Grammy Music compilation with "Streets of Philadelphia"; Bruce Springsteen's 12th album,* Greatest Hits; *the Holland promo CD-I,* Mega Popclassics.

For his own Christmas present, more than one year after the release of *Prodigal Son* was announced, Springsteen won his legal battle against the record company Dare International. Springsteen was scheduled to take Dare back to court in early 1995 for a fully contested battle over the rights to the material, but on December 19, 1994, Springsteen's counsel announced that the dispute had been settled out of court. Dare had originally agreed to delay the proposed album until the outcome of the hearing on the 19th, and Springsteen's victory came with the settlement that day as Dare agreed never to release the material and to turn over any master tapes and relevant material to Springsteen's lawyers. The prolonged court battle suggests to some that the British label did indeed have a strong case, but the settlement in Springsteen's favor now ensures that, once and for all, he owns the rights to all of his recorded material.

The Mastersound pressing of *Born to Run* is now available in different, smaller packaging, abandoning the highly-criticized oversized plastic case. Fans who bought the Mastersound pressing when it came in the large sleeve did not receive a separate CD booklet since the booklet was attached to the case itself. If like many collectors you wish to toss the useless plastic slipcase, Sony will send you the jewel-case size booklet for free while supplies last. Send your request to Legacy Recordings, *Born to Run* CD booklet offer, 550 Madison Avenue, 31st Floor, New York, NY 10022-3211.

For Nils fans, there's the *Rare Tracks Collection*, from Japan's Video Arts label. *Rare Tracks* contains various live, single, and extended versions of Lofgren classics, including the extended "Crooked Line," plus "Keith Don't Go," "No Mercy," and "Across the Tracks," all live. For more live material, Lofgren's *Code of the Road* has finally been released on CD in the US. Originally a two-LP set, *Code of the Road* is now a single CD available from Stampede Records.

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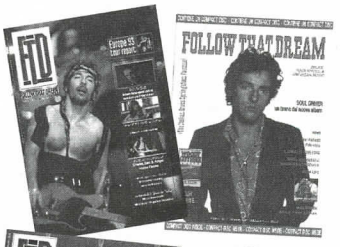

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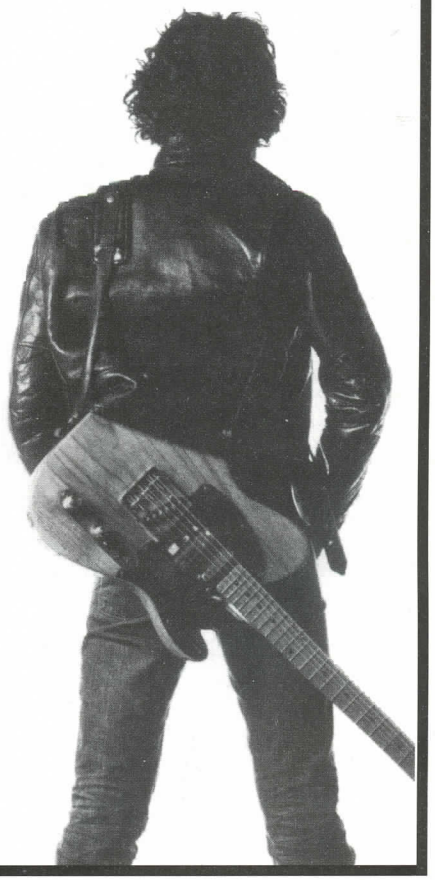

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"Streets of Philadelphia" US 2-track Contains "Streets" and the live B-side, "Atlantic City" from ~~*Un*~~*plugged,* in a jewel box.....$5

In Concert: MTV ~~Un~~plugged Released in Europe only and now out of print, this official Sony CD has 13 live tracks, including "Atlantic City".....$25

Born to Run Mastersound CD Corrected and re-released by Sony, truly stunning sound from Super Bit Mapping technology. Gold CD....$32.50

Chimes of Freedom Canada CD5. Features live tracks from 1988: "Be True," "Tougher Than the Rest," "Chimes," and the acoustic "Born to Run," on a 5-inch CD with jewel box. Out of print.....$18

Live Collection Vol. 1 Japan CD5. Four tracks, with two non-LP b-sides, live versions of "Incident on 57th Street" and "For You." Out of print, great packaging.....$32.50

Blood, Sweat and Beers: Best of the Bar Bands This fantastic compilation collects Springsteen-related artists and captures the sound of the shore. Includes tracks from Nils, Southside, Joe Grushecky, John Eddie, and more.....$13

Rarities on Compact Disc Vol. 15 '93 Promo 23 track sampler from the Westwood One Radio Network, compiling rare tracks on CD. Features Bruce's "Viva Las Vegas," otherwise only available on the now out of print collection, *The Last Temptation of Elvis*. Also includes rare tracks by the Beatles, Stones, Queen, more. 23 tracks in all.....$25

"Chicken Lips and Lizard Hips" Australian CD5 from Disney's *For Our Children* album, with Little Richard's "Itsy Bitsy Spider" and Bruce's "Chicken Lips" track as the B-side. Very rare, highly collectible, and comes in a cardboard sleeve.....$30

Harry Chapin Tribute CD Includes Bruce's rendition of "Remember When the Music."....$16

Baseball's Greatest Hits The **Bruce Springstone** 45 and 12-inch are hard to find, but the classic Springstone track "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" is now available on CD. Includes 21 other baseball-related tracks like "Who's On First," from Rhino.....$15

USA for Africa: We are the World "Trapped" live on CD: recorded at Meadowlands, 8/5/84.....$18

Sun City Finally on CD with brand new liner notes from Little Steven and a bonus track. With Bruce, Bono, Gabriel, Dylan, Townshend, Raitt, etc...$17

For Our Children Disney benefit for children with AIDS, includes Bruce's "Chicken Lips...".....$15

Cover Me The classic compilation of Springsteen covers on CD from Rhino.....$16

John Prine: The Missing Years With Bruce on "Take a Look at My Heart."....$15

Southside Johnny: All I Want is Everything: Best of 1979-1991 (Rhino) Liner notes written by Southside, "Walk Away Renee," "Trash It Up," plus 16 others. Great live cover photos.....$16

The Best of Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes (Epic/Legacy) 19 tracks: four live, all remastered. No overlap with Rhino collection!.....$18

Southside Johnny: Better Days Topped our readers poll for "Favorite Album"! Includes Bruce-penned "All the Way Home."....$15

Southside Johnny: Reach Up and Touch the Sky Great live album from 1981 now on CD.....$12

Southside Johnny: Hearts of Stone.....$12

Little Steven: Men Without Women.....$16

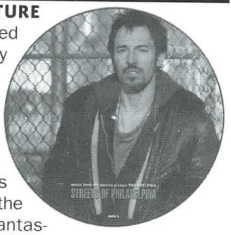
Little Steven: Voice of America.....$16

Gary U.S. Bonds: Dedication.....$16

Gary U.S. Bonds: On the Line.....$16

VINYL

UK 12-inch vinyl PICTURE DISC This strictly limited edition record (only 5000 pressed), features a spectacular Preston photo of the Boss from the "Streets of Philly" video shoot. Contains the four tracks from the European CD-EP, a fantastic item! Available while they last.....$15



The River UK 12" Includes "The River," "Rosalita," "Born to Run" and a classic cover shot of Bruce seated outside gas station. m-/m.....$50

Human Touch US LP Sealed, mint.....$12

Lucky Town US LP Sealed, mint.....$12

~~Un~~plugged 2-LP set Sealed, mint.....$20

UK *Streets of Philadelphia/If I Should Fall Behind* on 7-inch vinyl with picture sleeve!.....$8

"I'm On Fire"/"Born in the U.S.A." PICTURE DISC Great live Bruce image on waving flag background/ shaped 7" disc.....$25

POSTERS

•**Poster #1169: *Tunnel of Love* Beach Shot** Beautiful outtake photo from the *Tunnel* sessions. Bruce against deep blue sky as seen in *Tunnel* tourbook, white type. Quite rare, these have recently commanded twice this much!.....$20

•**Poster #8177: '92 Leibovitz Shot** An officially licensed portrait of Bruce Springsteen by Annie Leibovitz. Predominantly rich browns and golds, the image on this commercial poster is spectacular, showing Bruce from the chest up (wearing dragon pendant, cross, etc.), with type down the side. Approx. 2'x3', in pristine condition!.....$15

Wild & Innocent Promo This medium-sized poster is the cover of the second album inset on a larger cream-colored sheet. Very rare, incredible condition: m- or better.....$50

Video Anthology Promo Large poster issued to video and record stores, with cover shot and titles of songs down the side. Fantastic. m.....$8

US Live Cover Shot 2' x 2' giant, gorgeous blow-up of the *Live 75-85* cover. Super! m-.....$8

SPECIAL! BOTH POSTERS ABOVE FOR $12, SAVE $4

Little Steven Freedom No Compromise Poster Deal Gorgeous 2' x 3' promo of the cover shot PLUS a separate 2' x 2' poster of colorful type saying "Little Steven, Freedom No Compromise, New Album." Get both for just.....$8

E Street Family Tree Our own poster edition of the family tree that ran in the *Backstreets* book. Red ink on white. m.....$12

BOOKS AND MAGAZINES

Penthouse Poster Mag 5/76. Great one-shot with lots of pics, entire magazine folds out into giant live shot of Bruce. Pictured at right. m- and rare! Regularly $18, ON SALE.....$15

Bruce Springsteen In His Own Words Compiles tons of quotes from shows, interviews, arranges them by subject. Great pics, too.....$16

Blinded by the Light Compiled in 1985 by Humphries and Hunt. Part biography, part discography, tons of pictures and info. Limited quantity.....$25

•**LOCAL HERO: Springsteen in the Words of His Band** by Ermanno Labianca, photos by Giovanni Canitano. Through exclusive interviews, the 1992-'93 band members tell their stories, giving a glimpse into Springsteen's creative process and where his music is headed in the '90s, a beautiful hardback with tons of color photos.....$45

•**ROLL YOUR TAPES** Another beautiful hardcover book published in Italy, lavishly illustrated with tons of full-color photographs. This one focuses on the first 228 Springsteen bootleg CDs, including track listings, running times, and venue/date listings for all songs. No ratings or comments on quality are given, but this book would make a great visual companion piece to the more descriptive *You Better Not Touch 1 & 2*. A spectacular visual document of Boss bootlegs to date.....$40

BACKSTREETS Springsteen: The Man and His Music By Charles R. Cross and the editors of *Backstreets* Magazine. 1992 Paperback ed., revised and updated with new photos and material.....$19

BACKSTREETS Springsteen: The Man and His Music 1989 Hardback edition.....$15

Led Zeppelin: Heaven and Hell By Charles R. Cross and Erik Flannigan. Beautiful hardcover, packed with amazing photos $24.95

50 Guaranteed Tips to Great Springsteen Tickets By the editors of *Backstreets* Magazine.....$8

Backstreets Magazine #1 Ltd. edition reprint.....$2

For True Rockers Only #17. Great UK Bruce mag., latest issue.....$6

For True Rockers Only Back issues (#10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16) each.....$8

Backstreets Binder The perfect way to keep issues of your favorite magazine in one convenient place. Heavy duty, attractive, black binder with gold "Backstreets" lettering. Holds up to 25 back issues.....$15

MISCELLANY

Pink Cadillac T-shirt The classic! The most highly demanded Springsteen t-shirt from ten years ago is available again. Officially licensed white tee, front design only, XL only.....$16

Pin Pack Official pack of 3 pins sold on recent tour, includes HT World Tour mini-placard.....$7

Unused tickets Obviously something you won't see very often! A complete printed ticket from the May 4, 1976 reserve-seating show at the Mississippi Coliseum.....$10

***Philadelphia* Laser Disc** Includes not only the motion picture, but also the bonus video for "Streets of Philadelphia" with alternate vocal track....$39.95

•**BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: ~~UN~~PLUGGED IN CONCERT** Live full-length VHS home video taped especially for MTV and including two bonus tracks not broadcast on MTV.....$25

•**BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: VIDEO ANTHOLOGY 1978-88** Springsteen's promotional clips from the live "Rosalita" shot in 1978 through "Born to Run" (acoustic) shot in 1988 and previously unreleased. 18 clips in all, a 100 minute video history of Bruce and the E Street Band in glorious, digitally remastered Hi-Fi sound. VHS video.....$18

•**JOHN HAMMOND: From Bessie Smith to Bruce Springsteen** Outstanding 1990 special chronicling the career of the man who discovered Springsteen, Dylan, Billie Holiday and many others. Springsteen is seen both in interview and in some never before seen live footage from 1972. The entire special is superb, and the Bruce footage, though short, is an essential peek at the early days. VHS video.....$25

OFF THE WALL